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Records and archives management in the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Records and archives management in the United Nations".

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JIU/REP/2013/2

RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Prepared by

Gérard Biraud

Joint Inspection Unit
Geneva 2013

15-13163

Executive Summary

Records and archives management in the United Nations
JIU/REP/2013/2

The current United Nations policies and procedures and the related organizational arrangements in place do not allow for effective records and archives management (RAM) either at Headquarters or in the field. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) looked into this issue not only in terms of preserving institutional memory, but also from the perspective of efficiency of working processes, accountability and transparency of business transactions, decision-making processes and risk management. The primary audience of the present report goes beyond professional information management officers as the report contains recommendations that should help to raise the awareness of decision makers, line managers and staff engaged in substantive activities on the importance of effective RAM as an essential component of good governance, a prerequisite for efficient administrative processes, a basis for enhanced knowledge management and a source of benefit across various areas and at many levels of the United Nations entities.

Regulatory frameworks require consolidation

The report highlights the urgent need to update and consolidate the respective regulatory frameworks governing RAM in the United Nations entities. Those frameworks should be recast into a comprehensive and unequivocal set of principles, rules and practice-oriented procedures covering the whole life cycle of a document (recommendation 1). This prerequisite would ensure that these principles are strictly applied throughout the entities based on tailored RAM programmes (recommendation 2) that need to be sustained by sufficient training for each category of stakeholders (staff at large, managers and RAM focal points) and monitored effectively (recommendation 3).

One of the main challenges is ensuring that the policy and procedures in place allow for all records (paper-based, digital and those based on other technologies) to be processed in accordance with the same principles, despite the obvious differences in their formats and features. It is well understood that the tools necessary to capture, manage and store them are quite different, but in order to ensure corporate consistency in their use, all records should be subject to the same processing principles. This has been achieved by some international organizations because of a strong commitment on the part of both their senior management and Member States.

Practices for both physical paper and digital records need to be improved significantly

At present, RAM arrangements in the United Nations are characterized by fragmented approaches and the inconsistent implementation of policy principles. The current challenges in terms of the capture, processing and preservation of physical paper-based records as archives mean that it is not clear whether or not records of substantive, administrative, legal or historical value are captured and transferred to a corporate repository to adequately preserve them, or whether they are simply lost.

The absence of dynamic management of digital records and the lack of application of RAM principles to such records (unless they are printed) expose the entities concerned to major risks in terms of integrity, security and authenticity both at present and in the future when those records will have to be processed and assessed in line with RAM and may represent the only basis for meaningful archives. Therefore, significant improvement is indispensable in the deployment of electronic document and records management systems (EDRMS) to ensure dynamic management of those records (recommendation 4). In order to build the future archives of the United Nations entities, the question of digital preservation is a key issue for immediate consideration.

The status quo is no longer an option

The United Nations entities need to make significant progress to ensure effective functioning of RAM programmes, both at their headquarters and in field offices. This requires a long-term corporate commitment at the highest level of each entity, from both Member States and senior management. Properly reviewing and consolidating RAM principles and procedures, adapting them to the digital world and ensuring that they are embraced at all levels will also require an initial investment to build on internal capacity and to equip the United Nations entities with appropriate tools, notably in the digital environment. In the opinion of the Inspector, this investment is worthwhile given the potential medium-term benefits, e.g., enhancement of substantive work, efficiency gains and savings in personnel.

To that end, the Inspector recommends undertaking a coherent project to establish the appropriate conditions for the implementation of a RAM programme at the corporate level of each entity (recommendation 6). The principles of such a project should include the following key dimensions:

- Approval of Member States, convinced by a solid cost-benefit analysis of the direct and/or medium-term and long-term benefits of the project, including in terms of easy retrieval of related records, which would enhance administrative efficiency, organizational effectiveness and financial savings.
- Commitment from senior management to foster a culture of compliance among all managers and staff who will be the first to benefit from such improvement.
- Project governance at an appropriate level to provide overall vision, responsibility and authority on the various components of information management and to ensure a multidisciplinary approach (RAM, knowledge management and ICT) to mobilize different sets of expertise in a synergistic way.
- Entity-wide coverage at headquarters and field offices to ensure meaningful and timely dialogue on RAM requirements.

Bearing in mind the provisions of the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) Strategic Plan 2013-2016, which, in paragraph 13, favours joint projects taking into consideration the means and constraints of each entity, the Inspector also encourages the United Nations system organizations and entities to merge their efforts and resources on a voluntary basis to ensure a common approach to RAM matters, particularly in regards to the key issue of digital preservation of records (recommendation 5).

Recommendation 1:

The Secretary-General and each of the executive heads of the United Nations entities covered by this report should review their respective regulatory frameworks governing RAM and recast them into a comprehensive and unequivocal set of principles, practice-oriented procedures and rules to keep pace with changes in the record-keeping environment and technology, and cover the whole life cycle of recorded information. They should ensure strict compliance with those principles, procedures and rules for any materials identified as records of the organization or entity.

Recommendation 2:

The Secretary-General and each of the executive heads of the United Nations entities covered by this report, as well as their senior managers, should be accountable for ensuring that all departments, offices and other entities under their responsibility have developed and apply the basic components of records management programmes to all records for which they have managerial responsibility.

Recommendation 3:

The Secretary-General and each of the executive heads of the United Nations entities covered by this report should ensure that appropriate time and resources are allocated to institutionalizing tailored RAM training programmes delivered by experienced RAM experts, both at headquarters and in the field, to (a) senior and middle-level managers; (b) records coordinators and other staff involved in RAM activities; and (c) staff at large.

Recommendation 4:

The Secretary-General and each of the executive heads of the United Nations entities covered by this report should ensure that information systems that capture, create or manage e-records meet international standards for record-keeping and the preservation of digital records and archives.

Recommendation 5:

The Secretary-General, in his capacity as a Chair of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, should create an inter-organizational task force chaired by an experienced RAM expert, bringing together those entities most interested in developing a common approach to the preservation of long-term and/or permanent digital records (strategy, policy and infrastructure).

Recommendation 6:

The General Assembly and the governing bodies of the United Nations entities covered by this report should request the Secretary-General and the respective executive heads to present a corporate or joint project proposal to enhance RAM in a consistent way within their respective entities.

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Abbreviations

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
ARMS	Archives and Records Management Section of the United Nations Secretariat
CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CIO	Chief Information Officer
CITO	Chief Information Technology Officer
CMP	Capital master plan
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DM	Department of Management
DPI	Department of Public Information
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
EC	European Commission
ECM	Enterprise content management
EDRMS	Electronic document and records management system
ERMS	Electronic records management system
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HLCM	High Level Committee on Management
HR	Human resources
ICT	Information and communications technology
ICA	International Council on Archives
IMIS	Integrated Management Information System
IMS	Institutional Memory Section
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
IRMCT	International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system
KM	Knowledge management
LKM	Linear kilometre
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAH	Offices away from Headquarters
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management
OICT	Office of Information and Communication Technology
RAM	Records and archives management
RCUN	Records common to most United Nations offices
RM	Records management
RMO	Records management officer
RMU	Records management unit
TOR	Terms of reference
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
UNON	United Nations Office at Nairobi
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNOV	United Nations Office at Vienna
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNU	United Nations University
USG	Under-Secretary-General
WFP	World Food Programme
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

I. Introduction

A. Background

1. As part of its programme of work for 2012, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) conducted a review of records and archives management (RAM) in the United Nations. This review originates from an internal proposal made by the Inspector, in which 19 participating organizations expressed an interest during the consultative process, leading to its inclusion in the final programme of work.

2. This review could be considered a surprising selection as the word "archives" is often associated with a stereotype of accumulated dusty paper files dumped in the basements of public buildings and hardly ever consulted by anyone other than historians and students. However, the "Universal Declaration on Archives" adopted by the General Assembly of the International Council on Archives (ICA) (Oslo, September 2010)[1] and endorsed in November 2012 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) swept aside this outdated image and judiciously recalled that archives and records management functions serve to preserve, maintain and provide access to the records of an organization, thereby providing insight into its history and institutional memory and identity. Archives record decisions, actions and memories, and foster greater accountability, transparency and efficiency, all of which represent key components of the good governance of international organizations.

B. Objectives

3. The objectives of this review are to assess whether or not the current set of United Nations policies and procedures and the related organizational arrangements in place provide the conditions for effective records and archives management at headquarters as well as in the field, where applicable. The review also aims at identifying the areas requiring improvement within respective current RAM practices.

4. The primary audience of the present report goes beyond professional information management officers as the report contains recommendations that should help to raise the awareness of decision makers, line managers and staff engaged in substantive activities on the importance of effective RAM as an essential component of good governance, a prerequisite for efficient administrative processes, a basis for enhanced knowledge management and a source of benefit across various areas and at many levels of the United Nations entities. RAM should therefore be assessed not only in terms of preserving institutional memory, but also in terms of reliability and efficiency of working processes, accountability and transparency of business transactions, decision-making processes and risk management. RAM supports knowledge management and knowledge-sharing within an institution by ensuring that expert-based substantive content is retained and made accessible to different parts of the institution.

[1] Available at http://www.ica.org/6573/reference-documents/universal-declaration-on-archives.html. Available also on the JIU website (www.unjiu.org) as annex X to this report.

5. This report provides a comparative analysis of the challenges faced by the United Nations Secretariat and all the entities placed under the direct or indirect authority of the Secretary-General and presents potential solutions to those challenges. It highlights similarities and differences observed in the United Nations entities, identifies good practices and positive initiatives as well as difficulties, insufficiencies and failures.

C. Rationale

6. The United Nations entities face a number of serious challenges in terms of RAM. There are important reasons for improving the existing RAM arrangements, not only in terms of the preservation of institutional memory and substantive knowledge, but also in regards to the expected efficiency benefits of enhanced RAM practices in most work areas (administrative, normative and substantive) as well as the potential related financial savings. These benefits and savings should be factors for decision-making by Member States and senior management in this area. Finally, this report could also serve to enhance succession planning, handover processes and business continuity requirements both when a staff member leaves a position and when vital records, including administrative processes and substantive knowledge, have to be preserved.

D. Scope and definitions

7. This review covers the United Nations Secretariat, its funds and programmes and other associated entities hereafter jointly referred to as the "United Nations Group".[2] The recommendations may also be of interest to specialized agencies of the United Nations system which may face similar situations in this area.

8. The focus of the review shifted from "archives management" to "records management" given that a credible and exhaustive archival collection is necessarily the result of the adequate implementation of well-defined and tailored records management programmes at all levels of an entity. The review deals with the management of organizational records as defined by the international standard ISO 15489: "Record: information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business".[3] It does not cover other items such as official

[2] As mentioned in the JIU report on staff-management relations within the United Nations transmitted to the General Assembly on 9 July 2012 (see A/67/136), "United Nations Group" refers to the United Nations Secretariat Headquarters; three United Nations offices away from Headquarters (OAH), in Geneva (UNOG, OCHA, OHCHR, UNCTAD, UNECE, UNHCR and UNRWA), Nairobi (UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat) and Vienna (UNODC, UNOV); and four regional economic commissions (ECA in Addis Ababa, ESCAP in Bangkok, ESCWA in Beirut and ECLAC in Santiago); as well as the more than 40 peacekeeping operations and special political missions, the United Nations funds and programmes (UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS, UNRWA, UN-Women and WFP), the United Nations University (UNU) and two United Nations criminal tribunals (the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha and Kigali and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague) and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT). This review does not cover the secretariats of the various conventions.

[3] ISO 15489: *Information and Documentation — Records Management, Part 1 (General)*, 2001.

parliamentary documentation and public information material, including corporate publications, brochures, pamphlets or any other published documents for which corporate custodians should be identified and specific principles and processes put in place to create adequate official repositories.

9. Archive collections are not only passive repositories of records for long-term preservation. In addition to being historical collections, they constitute a legacy of an organization's work and, as such, contain information that must inform its ongoing work. The institutional archive services have an active role to play in ensuring continued access to such collections which implies a number of activities such as archival arrangement and description, reference services, user services and reading rooms, proactive preservation activities and outreach activities. Owing to its limitations, the present report does not address explicitly these important RAM components.

10. According to the Secretary-General's Bulletin on record-keeping and the management of United Nations Archives (ST/SGB/2007/5), records are labelled "archives" when they refer to "records to be permanently preserved for their administrative, fiscal, legal, historical or informational value." It further specifies that United Nations archives are "those of the United Nations Organization, regardless of physical location, and archives of pre-existing organizations for which the Secretariat is custodian, paper-based and electronic records that should be preserved because of their administrative, fiscal, legal, historical or informational value as evidence of the official business of the United Nations."

11. Records management should be recognized as supporting and informing the broader and more complex areas of information management, enterprise content management, knowledge management, document management, web content management, digital asset management, collaborative working processes and business processes management, among others. While all these aspects are touched upon in this report and will benefit from RAM, they do not constitute its main focus.

12. In the same vein, the United Nations entities are currently exploring new technological horizons, including the use of remote communications platforms, cloud computing and collaborative solutions to reshape some of their traditional operational models with the objective of generating efficiency gains through initiatives such as the World Food Programme's "Connect" initiative. In this respect, recommendation 4 of JIU/REP/2012/8 in favour of a common approach to cloud-based solutions among organizations-members of the CEB HLCM should be considered. These initiatives, while related to documents and records management, are not covered by this review as they deserve a separate and thorough analysis, notably concerning their proven efficiency gains and financial savings. However, the avenues they open for future work of the United Nations reinforce, in the view of the Inspector, the need for proper RAM policies and practices.

E. Methodology

13. The Inspector used a range of evaluation techniques to ensure triangulation of the findings and well-supported conclusions and recommendations. This report includes information and data received as of August 2013, including:

- A desk review of relevant policy documents available in the public domain (internet and intranet sites of the entities covered, specialized professional associations and vendors) on RAM and related issues.

- An inception paper was produced, describing the objectives, scope and methodology of the review and the issues to be studied/identified, as well as the key definitions and evaluation questions to be used (together with related points) and the RAM key stakeholders and timeline.

- Questionnaires provided to the responsible RAM units in the various entities concerned and analysis of the responses provided. The vast majority of the entities contacted by the JIU team through the entities' JIU focal points provided inputs, with the exception of UNEP and UNON.

- On-site missions and interviews with the records management officers (RMO) and archivists in the entities covered, as appropriate, or with the other officers in charge of RAM in order to discuss corporate arrangements and regulatory frameworks.

- Face-to-face and video interviews with selected records producers and users (managers and staff of substantive and support departments), information technology officers, designated RAM focal points for organizational units and consultants, among others, to discuss their practices. The Inspector also visited FAO to study the rationales and the lessons learned of the Records Management Modernization Project as a large scale (2010-2015) operation aimed at reviewing and streamlining records management processes in this organization.

- Analysis of responses collected through a JIU online survey distributed to selected stakeholders to assess practices followed by records producers or owners in various organizational units (such as departments, regional and country offices, peacekeeping and special political missions).[4] The inputs received originate from 58 out of 165 individuals contacted in writing as a partly selected and partly random sample.

- Consultations with officials of several national and international organizations specializing in RAM (International Council on Archives, French National Archives) and with officials from comparable intergovernmental organizations (such as the European Commission (EC), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the World Bank) to provide insight on how they address RAM issues. The Inspector also attended the 2013 Workshop of the Section of International Organizations of ICA.

- Comments from participating organizations on the draft report have been taken into account in finalizing the report. In accordance with article 11.2 of the JIU statute, this report was finalized after consultation among the Inspectors so as to test its conclusions and recommendations against the collective wisdom of the Unit.

- Internationally recognized standards or guidelines produced mainly by international organizations (International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and ICA)) or national normative institutions were consulted.

[4] See annex VIII to the present report.

14. The report contains six recommendations, the last of which is addressed to the United Nations General Assembly and the governing bodies of the United Nations entities concerned. To facilitate the handling of the report, implementation of the recommendations and monitoring thereof, annex IX contains a table indicating whether the report is being submitted to the organizations concerned for action or for information. The table identifies the recommendations that are relevant for each organization, specifying whether they require a decision by the legislative or governing body of the organization or action by its executive head. Keeping in mind the scope of the review, as defined in section D above, the recommendations are addressed to the Secretary-General and/or to all the executive heads of the separately administered organs and programmes hereafter referred to as the "United Nations entities covered by this report".

15. The Inspector wishes to express his appreciation to everybody who assisted him in the preparation of this report, particularly those who participated in the interviews and so willingly shared their knowledge and expertise.

F. Limitations

16. This review focuses on institutional arrangements and management aspects. It is not intended to solve all questions related to professional aspects and does not include consideration of in-depth technological matters on which JIU has limited expertise. It should be understood that in the year 2000 roughly a quarter of the information recorded in the world was in digital format, the rest being on paper, film and analogic media. In 2013, **digital information represents 98 per cent of the total**, as a result of the explosion in the number of digital files which doubles every three years.[5] The exponential increase in the volume and formats of digital records has triggered a wide range of records management questions for which there are no definitive answers as of yet, but which may have a significant impact on the options the United Nations shall consider in seeking to preserve the integrity of its institutional memory. These strategic questions are critical in many international organizations and national governments, all of which face similar types of issues and difficulties and need to make strategic choices for the future. **Few of them have come up with a final strategy and action plan to address all the factors and challenges**. A number of limitations therefore apply to this review:

- The relative absence of available baseline data in the reviewed entities: while it is obvious that the management of records and archives is unsatisfactory in many respects, nobody knows the real extent of the problem. Inventories of records and archives are not compiled systematically for physical paper records and are rarely compiled for digital records.
- The diversity of the entities and their respective situations: at present, RAM practices are extremely diverse and fragmented in the United Nations Secretariat and in its related entities, sometimes within a given office, department or programme and, a fortiori, at their different locations. Owing to time and budget constraints, information could not be collected in all the sub-entities of the entities covered. In the opinion of the Inspector, however, the

[5] Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier, *Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work and Think*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, May 2013.

set of information and figures gathered provides reasonable assurance that the trends and issues discussed in this report are relevant for all the entities concerned.

- The variety of types of records covered: while there is consensus among experts that RAM principles apply to all records regardless of their physical nature and characteristics (paper, digital, audio-visual, etc.) and electronic format concerned (.doc,.pdf,.jpeg, etc.,), with the evolution of technology, the environment in which records are created today is more complex than in the past and can no longer be analysed as a "linear life cycle model". A record may comprise multiple technologies; it may be a dataset comprising millions of transactions and may never be "fixed" in time. Being aware of these factors, the Inspector focused his attention on printed and digital records (mainly text-processed items, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) and did not tackle more specific and challenging areas, such as web content, social networks and mobile technologies, which are evolving rapidly. However, the challenges and deficiencies highlighted in this report certainly apply to this broader context.

II. Basics of records and archives management

17. This review focuses on a specialized area but tackles practical aspects of the work and daily activities of the United Nations entities and the vast majority of their staff. RAM principles are relatively simple and logical, but they rely on a number of key concepts that are often not well-known among the producers and users of information. This chapter is intended to introduce people who are unfamiliar with RAM to the concepts used in the report and explain how they relate to the United Nations working environment. The primary audience of this chapter should include decision makers, managers and delegates of Member States rather than the community of professional information and records managers and archivists who may not need to read it. A short glossary of terms is available in annex I to this report and a comparative list of definitions used in selected organizations is available on the JIU website.[6]

A. Records management

18. Records management is defined as the field of information management that is "responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records."[7] This definition originates from the needs of the private sector but is also valid for international organizations such as the United Nations which should be subject to at least the same standards of accountability, transparency and efficiency, and for which many of the activities could be of historical interest.

19. Records management refers to a dynamic approach to the type and content of a piece of information intended to clarify its current and future interest and value for

[6] Available on the JIU website (www.unjiu.org) as annex XI to this report.
[7] ISO 15489-1, para. 3.16.

an entity and the reasons underlying such interest and value, including normative, legal, substantive and historical reasons. Records management is more than just keeping unit or entity files in order and ensuring that information is accessible, but also refers to **sorting and retaining valuable information, in any form, based on the criterion of value, recognizing some of them as "records" and a portion of those as "archives" as a result of standardized processes described in this report**. As key aspect of management, it implies appropriate processing: keeping information where it logically belongs, protecting the physical or electronic environment where it is stored, limiting access to information that is considered confidential or secret, assessing its time of usability from various reasons, destroying it after related deadlines, and, retaining and safeguarding the remainder of such records considered to be of permanent value.

B. Organizational records

20. In the context of their official activities, managers and staff are confronted with an overwhelming amount of information, either self-generated or received from other parts of their organization or entity and its partners. This information serves multiple purposes including: assisting in decision-making, furnishing public information, reporting to Member States, providing support for normative work or as evidence of administrative processes. This ocean of information contains items of variable value and encompasses various levels of obsolescence from the legal, normative, administrative, political or historical perspective. For the United Nations, as for any other public or private institution, **it is of the utmost importance to identify, manage and retrieve pieces of information which have either temporary or permanent value that characterize them as a "record"** as defined by ISO 15489-1 (see paragraph 8).

21. Mission reports, procurement contracts, signed correspondence, completed administrative forms, minutes of senior management committees, staff files and financial statements, for example, would be considered organizational records as well as products for public information, including web content. Determining the relative importance of records ("records appraisal") is a complex process that should be supported by professional expertise since it needs to be undertaken in the context of an organization's business and record-keeping requirements. Organizational records are the property of the organization. In the context of RAM, they can be categorized as:[8]

- Active records, which are in frequent use, regardless of their date of creation, are required for current business relating to the administration or substantive functions of the entity. Such records are usually maintained in office space close to hand. They are also known as current records.
- Semi-active and inactive records (also known as non-current records), which are no longer required for day-to-day access but may be required for

[8] See definitions on the website of the Archives and Records Management Section (ARMS) of the United Nations Secretariat. ST/SGB/2007/5 refers to "non-current record" as any data or information no longer needed for daily use in the transaction of official business but to be retained for a fixed period of time, and to "transitory record" as any data or information required for only a limited time to ensure the completion of a routine action or the preparation of a subsequent record.

administrative or legal reasons for a given period of time or permanently. **Such records should be removed from the working office area to another repository**. The question of their elimination or preservation arises at the end of their **prescribed retention period as should be determined by the entity in accordance with the category of records to which they belong**.

22. In the working practice, many copies of records are kept at hand for professional use and convenience of staff. They represent an important volume of documents while the original version is safely held elsewhere by the entity. For example, in the United Nations Secretariat, budget and human resources records are held by the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts and the Office of Human Resources Management respectively, but convenience copies may be kept by various departments.

23. In the course of conducting this study, it became clear that in the United Nations the lines between the notion of records and the broader notions of documents and documentation are often blurred. All documents and other items produced or received in the course of conducting official business are records, some of which are more important than others. In the absence of a formal records inventory, organizational units or records producers and receivers do not always have a clear picture of the relative importance of the items used in the context of their activities. As a consequence, many organizational units and individuals are vulnerable to either losing information or retaining volumes of unnecessary physical and/or digital documents or information.

C. Records management programme

24. A records management (RM) programme (or record-keeping programme) refers to a planned, coordinated set of policies, procedures and activities needed to ensure the "efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, as evidence of and information about business activities and transactions."[9] In other words, **RM programmes provide the basis for consistent corporate arrangements to ensure proper RAM in accordance with common and agreed principles owned by all and applicable across all organizational parts**.

25. The existence of such RM programmes and their implementation is one of the main aspects covered by this review. These programmes should be implemented in every entity and should be built around key elements such as: (a) file classification scheme or file plans[10] developed by an entity to organize and arrange different types of files in logical order and conceived in accordance with its specific business and organizational requirements; (b) retention schedules defined by ST/SGB/2007/5 as comprehensive and practical instructions developed by a department or an office in dealing with the disposition of its records to ensure that each of them is retained for as long as necessary based on their administrative, fiscal, legal, historical or informational value; and (c) principles and rules relating to security and access.

[9] ISO 15489-1, para. 3.16.

[10] ISO 15489-2 defines classification as the process of identifying the category or categories of business activity and the records they generate and of grouping them, if applicable, into files to facilitate description, control, links and determination of disposition and access status.

26. This is a very practical issue in that records management programmes should guide managers and staff members in handling their documents in the context of their activities. This would ensure that the status of each item produced or received is well understood. It would also point to their own responsibility in any subsequent processing. The private sector has realized the benefits of such programmes which enable companies to retain only the information that is of business value or is subject to regulatory requirements and audit trail.

Life cycle of documents

27. A key RM concept is that a record goes through various stages from its creation to its disposition. The disposition of an item refers to the final choice after appraisal between either often useful destruction or permanent retention as an archive considered valuable for the long term.

28. Specific corporate policies have to be in place for each step of the life cycle of a document: creation, capture, administration, distribution or sharing, indexing, retention, storage, search, access, retrieval, use and destruction or archiving for preservation. In the United Nations Secretariat, these steps are often under the responsibility of various entities such as the substantive departments, conference and documents management services, the department for public information, the information technology office, which makes difficult, if not impossible, to ensure a coherent and integrated approach.

29. Ideally, throughout its entire life cycle a record should carry attributes, known as "metadata", that are determined upon its creation: date, authorship, degree of confidentiality and access rights, content description and technical parameters, among other things. The metadata have a direct impact on how a specific record should be managed at each step and can be descriptive of the content of the item and of its technical specifications and structure. In the digital world, metadata are becoming increasingly important and refer to the content of the record and its technical characteristics.

Filing plan

30. In any unit, entity or whole organization, records related to various matters should be ordered according to a common filing or classification system. Any unit should logically organize its internal documentation in order to be able to subsequently retrieve information for internal or external users. For non-professionals, the use of the term "classification" may be a source of confusion as it also refers to "classification levels" of information (unclassified, confidential and strictly confidential), which has a different meaning.

Retention period

31. Logically, records should be kept and preserved for only as long as they are effectively or presumably useful; this length of time is called the "retention period". As stated in the ISO norm, "decisions about how long records should be maintained within a records system are based on an assessment of the regulatory environment, business and accountability requirements and the risks. Initially, such decisions should involve the unit administering the specific business activity, the designated records manager and others as required, in compliance with the external and internal records management policies or standards and the requirements for records

associated with the specific business activity." If records are not covered by clear, accepted and promulgated provisions (retention schedules), there is a high risk of inconsistencies in practices leading to the loss of valued records or the keeping of unnecessary items.

32. One of the purposes of an agreed retention period is to allow an organizational unit to have sufficient awareness of its records documenting liabilities and the confidence to decide whether its records continue to be required, and to identify records to be safeguarded for transfer as official archives in an official repository. The examples below show that a retention period complies first with legal and audit requirements concerning the transactions made by an entity, but also with common sense considerations.

Box 1: Examples of retention principles in the United Nations context

- During a recruitment process, documents such as candidate applications, test results, interview notes, reference checks and decisions on selection, are current records until the vacant position is filled and are kept by the recruiting department or office. Once this administrative step is completed, these items become semi-active or inactive as they would only be of use in case of a contestation or for recourse. After the prescribed retention period they should be disposed of according to internal rules or kept if they are of any historical value. The same type of reasoning applies, for example, in procurement activities and budget preparation.
- Attendance or sick leave sheets — not related statistics — are administrative records with limited value over time while documents on the duration of employment of staff members have to be preserved until the age of retirement for pension entitlements and should thus not be treated in the same manner.
- Human rights rapporteurs receive or produce a number of documents that remain active over the course of their entire mandate. When the rapporteur ceases his or her activities, the relevant files become inactive but may represent essential information above and beyond the information included in the official reports. These pieces of information reflect his or her work, the context in which he or she has worked and the overall situation in the country concerned; they should therefore be preserved as archives.

Access[11]

33. Key aspects of the management of records include determining the rules concerning security protection (classification levels) and access (permission rights), applying them to ensure that integrity and confidentiality are protected accordingly whilst, at the same time, enabling their retrieval and use by relevant users.

34. Access is a strategic consideration in the United Nations context. For its records and archives, each United Nations entity has several groups of potential users, such as staff members of the producing unit at various levels, staff at large,

[11] ISO 15489 defines access as "the right, opportunity, means of finding, using, or retrieving information". ICA refers to access as the "availability of records for consultation as a result both of legal authorization and the existence of finding aids".

diplomats of the permanent missions, delegates to conferences, members of the communities concerned by United Nations activities, external researchers (non-governmental organizations, the academic community, historians, students and journalists) and civil society at large. The purpose of access provision is to ensure timely and easy access to, and retrieval of, records needed in the continuing conduct of activities and to satisfy accountability requirements whilst securing the integrity of the records and protecting them from unauthorized use, alteration or destruction.

D. Records management and archives

35. **A credible and exhaustive (to the extent possible) archival collection is always the result of sensible RAM policies, and especially their adequate implementation via well-defined and tailored records management programmes at all levels of an entity**. In most entities, the records produced are owned by their creators (or receivers, for records from an external source) and should be processed using the various tools described in this chapter. At the end of each retention period, inactive records should be "sentenced", i.e., destroyed or transferred to an official and recognized archival repository. Archives are generally understood to represent less than 10 per cent of the total number of records.

36. When archives are well managed and accessible, they represent a repository of high intellectual value for future internal and external users. The mandates, goals and achievements of the United Nations make its archives an invaluable source of information on international relations, humanitarian assistance, economic and social development, environment and human rights, among other things. Unfortunately, many have witnessed the loss (sometimes by full containers) of invaluable evidence gathered on events as dramatic as those that took place in Somalia and Rwanda in the 1990s.

37. Records of permanent value kept as archives represent the only trail of what has been achieved, and why, by the United Nations and its entities, both at headquarters and in the field, especially after the closure of a peacekeeping mission or a field office. As put forward by one of the interviewees for this report, "the institutional memory of any United Nations entity is the result of the work of its staff members (what was done and how it was done at all levels), this evidence has to be captured and documented. There is a fundamental difference with the communication/public information material generated by the same entity which is then communicating about itself." Moreover, in many cases, official documents or final versions of policy documents, agreements, protocols or decisions can only be understood and interpreted correctly if the records of the negotiations that took place during the drafting period are preserved and read alongside the final document.

E. Records management and information management

38. The paradox is that although information and knowledge management are rightly seen as a strategic area for any organization to conduct its business and deliver on its mandates, record-keeping, which is one of its key elements of information management, is often considered as secondary or as a burden because it

is not clearly distinguished from document management or other aspects of well-organized work processes.

39. RAM considerations are not sufficiently integrated with other components of information management. Without diluting RM and its specificities in the broader concept of information management, the Inspector stresses that **the principles and procedures governing RAM are to be internalized by all those dealing with other key aspects of the management of corporate information**, such as enterprise content management (ECM), knowledge management (KM) and information and communications technology (ICT), which are only partially addressed in this review. Interested readers could consult the JIU website (www.unjiu.org) for other JIU reports focusing on ICT governance in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2011/9) and knowledge management (JIU/REP/2007/6).

III. Regulatory frameworks

40. The Inspector found that, despite similar organizational contexts and the need to address identical professional issues in all their technical dimensions, the United Nations entities have not adopted a common approach to RAM issues resulting in regulatory frameworks that can differ in significant regard. Annex II compiles existing policies governing RAM and flags the lack of up-to-date specific policies in some cases. Some policies were approved by executive heads whilst others were developed and approved at lower levels.

41. It is essential for the United Nations entities to have in place a RAM policy, either as a separate policy or as part of a wider information policy. This set of RAM principles, rules and procedures also requires regular revision according to changes in workflows and/or technological evolution. The policy should therefore be reviewed at agreed intervals.

42. In the last 10 years, the set of ISO standards relevant to RAM has evolved significantly.[12] The United Nations entities are lagging far behind in adoption of and compliance with internationally recognized standards that, in many cases, were produced after the issuance of the United Nations main policy documents. It appears that within the United Nations entities the conditions have not been met as yet to enable rapid compliance with these standards; however, **the Inspector stresses the importance of structuring the regulatory framework so that it is in alignment with ISO 15489 that provides the basic framework on the matter**. Based on his analysis, the Inspector acknowledges that existing policy documents address certain relevant RAM issues, but often in terms that are too vague and lack provisions on aspects flagged as important by the ISO standard, such as monitoring or training.

43. The existing set of policies and principles are rarely complemented by practical-oriented guidelines that are indispensable to ensuring corporate ownership. Consequently, there is a serious lack of awareness of the respective roles and responsibilities and how to fulfil them, resulting in a lack of compliance. The JIU survey flagged the same lack of a clear understanding of the regulatory framework among the producers and users of records.

[12] Annex III lists most of the relevant international norms and standards.

44. Based on the content analysis of the policies and the inputs provided during interviews, the Inspector studied the roles and responsibilities assigned by the respective policy documents to various stakeholders involved in RAM processes. There are two emerging models:

- A centralized approach giving a major role to a dedicated corporate unit composed of professional records management officers and archivists with specialized expertise (for example, the Archives and Records Management Section (ARMS) in the United Nations Secretariat or the Records and Archives Section (RAS) at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)).
- A decentralized approach allocating responsibilities to a number of corporate stakeholders of different kinds (for example, the division for administration, the IT division, among others). This is the model prevailing in the funds and programmes.

45. One should note, however, that even within the centralized approach, the trend to allocate increasingly more RAM responsibilities to records producers and owners themselves, including some professionally specialized aspects such as appraisal and description, is very much present.

A. United Nations Secretariat

46. RAM has been a subject of much thought since the creation of the United Nations. As early as 1946, the Secretary-General drew the attention of staff members to the fact that archival material was not properly deposited with the United Nations archives.[13] **Since 2007, the Secretary-General's Bulletin on record-keeping and the management of United Nations archives (ST/SGB/2007/5) is the mandatory guiding document for records and archives management in the United Nations Secretariat**. The Bulletin constitutes progress in comparison with previous administrative issuances governing the matter[14] and it establishes the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in RAM processes, emphasizing, in section 5, those of ARMS: "The Archives and Records Management Section shall be responsible for establishing policy and setting standards, including the design of record-keeping systems and procedures for the management of the records and archives of the United Nations, including their use, storage, retention and disposition and access rights. The Archives and Records Management Section shall also establish policy and standards for the structure, content and context of electronic records, in order to ensure that they are accurately created and captured in their integrity and preserved without alteration and remain accessible for as long as the electronic record is retained." Thus, it is clearly the responsibility of ARMS to ensure consistent practices throughout the United Nations Secretariat, but the mandate presupposes that sufficient capacity exists within ARMS to fulfil this mission which is not the case.

[13] See ST/SGB/23 (1946).

[14] ST/AI/326 (1984) and ST/SGB/242 (1991), among others. Various ad hoc Secretary-General's bulletins also include provisions for the management, care, preservation, storage, disposition of and access to the records and archives of specific entities, most of the time for sensitive political reasons or legal issues, but without a clearer indication of corresponding resources.

47. While the Secretary-General's bulletins are in principle legally applicable to all organizational units of the United Nations Secretariat,[15] the audit carried out by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in 2011 highlighted the need to clarify the regulatory framework concerning United Nations archives, as well as the jurisdiction of ARMS beyond United Nations Headquarters.[16] This JIU review confirmed that the issue is still pending.

48. ST/SGB/2013/1 restated that the Office of Central Support Services (which ARMS belongs to) is, among its many other complex tasks, responsible for "advising on records management and maintaining custody of the archives at Headquarters, offices away from Headquarters, regional commissions and United Nations field missions, operations and other offices of the Secretariat."[17] Thus, the budget-related liabilities were left aside and, as a result, the human and financial resources assigned to such an extremely broad mandate were clearly not commensurate with what would be required for effective and consistent implementation (annex IV). The information collected by JIU through its questionnaires and interviews confirmed the lack of awareness and the absence of consistent and uniform implementation of policy principles at OAH, as well as among the regional commissions where there are few examples of dedicated units or staff carrying out these functions (annex IV).

49. As a high-level policy document, the six-page Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2007/5) cannot, by its very nature, be exhaustive and detailed, and it has been complemented by a series of technical guidelines developed by ARMS (box 2). However, the Inspector stresses that the substantial lacunae, deficiencies and multiple grey areas of the bulletin contributed to the emergence of the following serious problems observed in practice:

- The objectives and benefits for the organization of proper RAM are not stated. There is no vision statement recognizing the importance of RAM and its benefits for the efficiency of the organization, its staff and stakeholders. This is not conducive to effective implementation.
- The ultimate role of ARMS is unclear. While ARMS has the responsibility to coordinate records and archives management across the Secretariat, it does not have the capacity to require that various departments and offices comply with those policy provisions. Section 5.4 of the bulletin, which states that "although the daily responsibility for maintenance of all records rests with the various departments and offices, the Chief of the Archives and Records Management Section, or his or her representative, may inspect existing records management systems and prescribe changes and/or improvements in those systems as may

[15] See ST/SGB/2002/11, the most recent amendment to the Secretary-General's bulletin on the organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations (ST/SGB/1997/5) that lists all organizational units concerned.

[16] Office of the Internal Oversight Services: "Audit of the United Nations Archives and Records Management", IAD: 12-00212, March 2012.

[17] This is consistent with previous reference documents on the subject: ST/AI/326 (1984) stated that the "Archives Section was to provide guidance and set standards for the maintenance, preservation, repair, arrangement, description and disposal of, and public access to, the archives and non-current records of other United Nations organs and of Secretariat units away from Headquarters" and ST/SGB/242 (1991) also mentioned that "archival records of the United Nations" include not just the Headquarters Secretariat, but also the Secretariat units away from Headquarters and subsidiary organs of the United Nations.

be required", needs better application. Within its existing resources, and despite optimal commitment, ARMS is not able to embrace nor successfully achieve all the missions entrusted to it.

- The provisions regarding respective roles and responsibilities create conditions for inconsistency. The policy allocates a number of responsibilities for each category of stakeholders, namely staff members, ARMS and departments and offices, but expresses them in vague terms, not taking into consideration whether the conditions for effective implementation are met or not, particularly in terms of capacity. In addition, there are no incentives or sanctions relating to compliance with the respective roles and responsibilities of the staff members or their line managers.

- As responsibilities for record-keeping are delegated to the departments and offices, it is not surprising that they have either developed their own approaches or have not taken any action at all, which in both cases makes it difficult to build a corporate-wide approach and implement subsequent actions. Nevertheless, a number of organizational units, "favoured" by circumstances (such as the United Nations CMP requiring removals and restricting space for physical filing), have developed a variety of positive records and archives initiatives at various scales and depths.

- The scope of the current main policy document is too narrow. While it states that all records, including electronic records and e-mail records, are covered by its provisions, it says very little about electronic records and e-mails (only two paragraphs, 6.1 and 6.2, and in vague terms), and does not mention audio and visual formats, which require specific measures for conservation, or web content and other emerging technologies. Some of these aspects have since been covered by ARMS guidelines and are being handled by a number of departments to the best of their ability owing to the goodwill of the staff concerned, but they are certainly not tackled in a concerted corporate-wide manner. In particular, specific policies should be conceived and promulgated to apply to audio-visual records and archives due to their specificities in appraisal, selection, description/cataloguing, storage, retention, migration, access and long-term preservation, among others.

Box 2: Main guidelines for the United Nations Secretariat produced by ARMS

Functional requirements for record-keeping systems	April 2003
Standard on record-keeping metadata	April 2004
Guidelines for identifying and managing personal records	April 2006
Guidelines for preventing and treating insect infestation in records and archives centres	June 2006
Standard on record-keeping requirements for digitization	April 2009
Guidelines on retention schedule implementation	January 2012
Guidelines on records management programme evaluation	January 2012

Guidelines on records destruction	January 2012
File classification scheme for administrative functions common to all United Nations offices	June 2012
Transfer of electronic records to the United Nations ARMS	September 2012
Guidelines on managing e-mails as records	--

50. The Inspector noted that several components of the United Nations Secretariat have developed or were drafting their own policies to complement ST/SGB/2007/5. While these documents address some of the gaps identified above and customize the framework set out in the Secretary-General's bulletin to their own contexts, they may be problematic in regard to their consistency with ST/SGB provisions. The same concern applies to the policy documents that were issued prior to 2007:

- The Geneva Information Circular on the matter (IC/Geneva/2001/55) predates ST/SGB/2007/5 and may seem to contradict some of its provisions. This situation may create confusion as flagged by OIOS in 2012. The Institutional Memory Section (IMS) of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) Library provides RAM services to a number of Geneva-based entities with no clearly agreed framework such as a memorandum of understanding.
- UNHCR released its Electronic Records Policy in 2005 (prior to ST/SGB/2007/5) following an earlier decision in 1996 to move towards having primarily electronic communication. The policy was strengthened in 2009. In particular, the Inspector noted the entity's efforts to adopt a didactic approach and that the text elaborates on the importance of proper records management for the Office and its staff. There are also more precise and specific provisions concerning the responsibilities of the stakeholders involved, namely the UNHCR management, the UNHCR staff, the Records and Archives Section (RAS) and the Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications (DIST).
- The UN-Habitat Archives and Records Management Policy (2007) highlighted various roles and responsibilities, in particular those of the Executive Director and the managers of divisions, branches, sections and offices. It formally and rightly recognized the need for and created the function of "records coordinators" as main focal points for RAM issues. At the time of drafting the present report (last quarter of 2013), the policy was under review for the purpose of including electronic records and digital preservation issues.
- The Archives and Records Management Policy (2011-2012) is the keystone of the ongoing RAM project instigated in 2011 at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) with the support of its Executive Secretary. Its purpose is to address the critical situation resulting from the absence of records and archives management within the Commission for decades since its creation in 1958. The policy was endorsed by the management of ECA and set out a framework for record-keeping activities to be further detailed in the Archives and Records Management Procedures Manual available for all ECA staff members.

- Since 2011, the Records Management Officer at Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has been gradually developing internal provisions for the narrower context of OHCHR (classification scheme, retention schedules, management of e-mails, etc.), which are all aligned to the main principles of the Secretariat.

- The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) released a policy instruction on records management in 2011 that stressed the various level of accountabilities up to the highest level of the Office by stating that "the Under-Secretary-General, through the Assistant Secretary-General and Directors, is accountable for ensuring that OCHA complies with United Nations records management policy, standards and procedures."[18]

B. Funds and programmes and other entities

51. Even in the absence of clear and specific delegation of authority in this respect, it appears to the Inspector that the management of records, and subsequently the archives, of the United Nations funds and programmes and of other entities, falls under the responsibilities of their respective executive heads. The analysis of the relevant policy documents highlighted the following concerns:

- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) policy documents require revision, firstly, because they continue to assign a number of essential RAM functions and tasks to dedicated RAM units that have been dismantled in recent years thereby raising concerns about how the embedded principles are currently being applied or monitored across these entities, and secondly, because they were drafted many years ago their provisions do not fully take into account technological evolution and their main focus remains on printed items and related physical archival processes, without sufficiently addressing electronic records, e-mails and other new formats.

- The World Food Programme (WFP) has a number of relevant directives on various RAM aspects complemented by procedures consolidated in the RM handbook. In the wake of budget cuts, however, the organization gave priority to operational activities and the 2007 internal restructuring led to the suppression of the Records Management Unit (RMU) which was the cornerstone of RAM within the entity. Despite the suppression of the unit, WFP maintained the function, but RAM programmes and practices suffered from the absence of corporate-wide implementation.

- The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) have recently drafted policy documents, but their implementation has been impaired by the absence of corporate procedures and tools to enable staff members to comply with their provisions, in particular with regard to digital records. Review and update of the processes are continuing. For example, rollouts for an e-registry tool for country office document management and the establishment of an e-mail records retention policy were foreseen for 2014 at UNDP.

[18] OCHA Policy Instruction on records management, 2011.

C. Other intergovernmental organizations

52. In contrast with the United Nations entities, several intergovernmental organizations are equipped with a much more developed, structured and detailed RAM regulatory framework, revealing a higher level of interest in and consciousness of RAM issues:

- The European Commission (EC) was affected in the late nineties by a series of major incidents, which demonstrated a lack of transparency and raised questions about its governance, in particular with regard to adequate records management. This had such a negative impact in terms of accountability that it led to the resignation of the entire Commission in 1999. As a result, the European Parliament requested, among others, significant improvement in the management of documents and records related to administrative processes. Thereafter, the EC starting in 2002 gradually adopted a number of rigorous and detailed regulations for document management and electronic or digitized documents that were compiled in 2009 in an 85-page reference manual that consolidated RM principles and practices.[19] In the Inspector's opinion, this is a good tool that provides a clear reference framework for action and helps staff members to find solutions to specific issues in a consistent manner.
- The "NATO policies and directives related to information management" is another example of a consolidation of all relevant elements of a policy framework into one corporate manual that provides its staff with a formal and detailed basis to guide them on archives and records management practices.[20]
- The World Bank has three different policy documents setting out the entire regulatory framework for the management of its records, all recently reviewed and updated. The Policy on the Management of Records (2011), the Policy on Access to Information (2010) and the Policy on Information Classification and Control (2010) are separate documents to be read in conjunction to understand the rationale for proper RM throughout the life cycle of World Bank documents. These reference documents are further complemented by a series of practical guidelines intended to support staff in implementing the policy principles. While the principles are embedded in the policy documents, the guidelines documents provide room for the regular update of procedures, as necessary, but without any high-level clearance processes.

The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance control of and compliance with RAM policies and practices.

[19] SEC(2009)1643: Implementing rules for the decision 2002/47/EC, ECSC, EURATOM on document management and for the decision 2004/563/EC, EURATOM on electronic and digitized documents.

[20] Policies and directives related to information management, NATO, 2012.

Recommendation 1

The Secretary-General and each of the executive heads of the United Nations entities covered by this report should review their respective regulatory frameworks governing RAM and recast them into a comprehensive and unequivocal set of principles, practice-oriented procedures and rules to keep pace with changes in the record-keeping environment and technology, and cover the whole life cycle of recorded information. They should ensure strict compliance with those principles, procedures and rules for any materials identified as records of the organization or entity.

IV. Current practices and related risks

53. Table 1 and figure I provide a comparative assessment of where each of the selected entities stands regarding RAM, using one set of criteria to assess their regulatory framework and another to gauge their practices. The criteria relating to policies include the existence and pertinence of specific provisions, their level of adoption and scope (physical paper and/or digital), the existence of specific provisions for managing electronic messages and attachments, and the institutional arrangements in place. The criteria relating to practices include the management of physical and digital records (RAM programmes, transfer, preservation, etc.) and levels of training and monitoring. The placement of the entities on each axis (see fig. I) resulted from the **addition** of the ratings attributed to each criterion.[21]

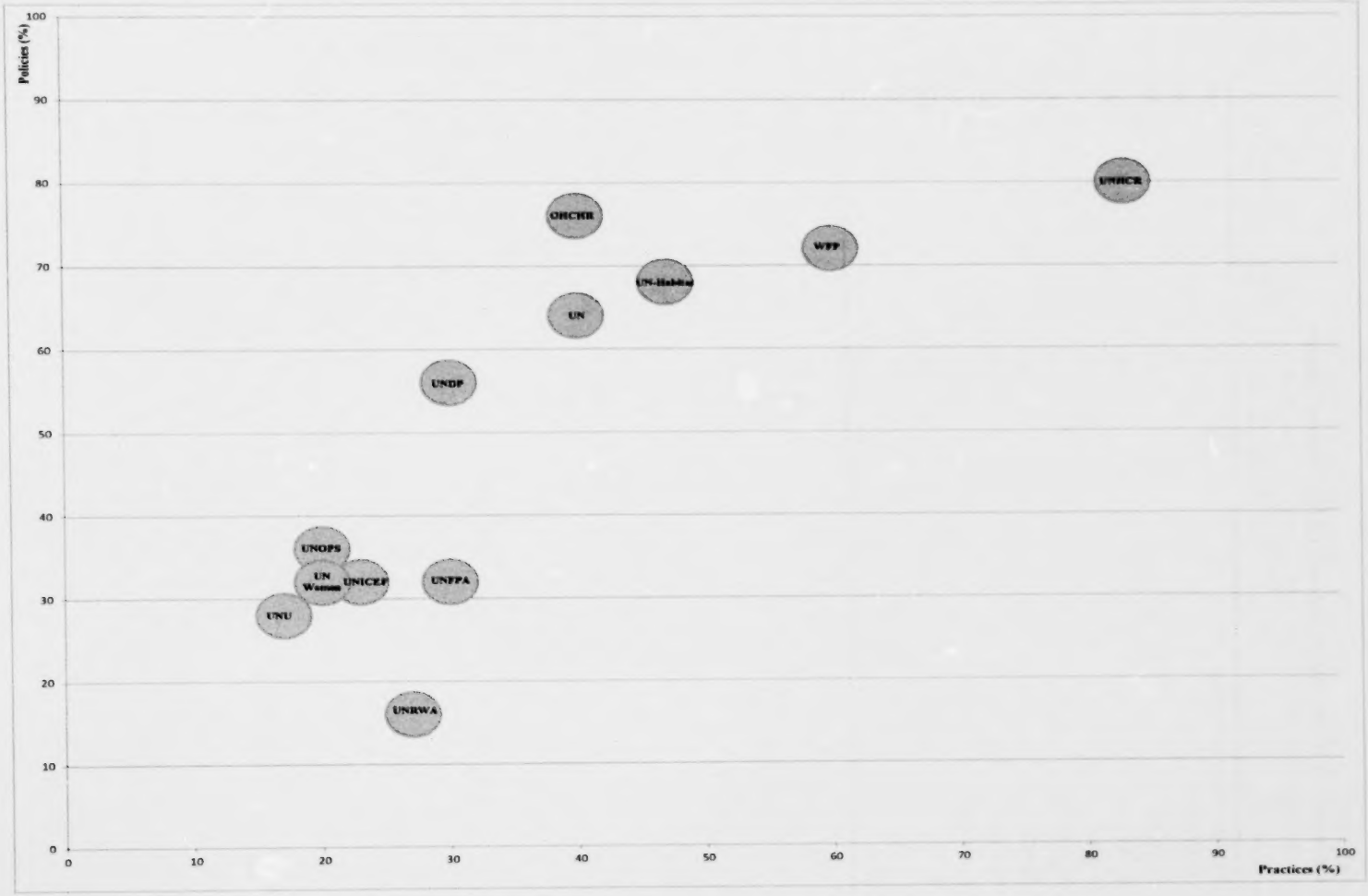
54. This representation does not intend to provide a scientific measurement, which would be impossible in this regard, but rather to provide a general overview of the situation in the United Nations entities. This overall assessment should obviously be nuanced according to the diversity of the entities, some having made progress in certain areas. However, the current RAM arrangements remain characterized by fragmented approaches and the inconsistent implementation of largely unknown policy principles. **The results obtained in regards to the actual practices remain below average**. This is of serious concern to the Inspector since the conditions are not currently being met to enable the situation to be significantly redressed.

[21] Using a more logical multiplicative model of aggregation would have resulted in spreading the respective positions more spectacularly across, and off, the graph. Annex VII presents the matrix of criteria used for this exercise. Annex XII presents the explanation of their application to each entity and is available from the JIU website (www.unjiu.org).

Table 1
Overview of RAM within selected United Nations entities

Organizations	*RAM policies assessed against a set of five criteria (percentage)*	*RAM practices assessed against a set of six criteria (percentage)*
United Nations Secretariat	64	40
OHCHR	76	40
UNHCR	80	83
UNDP	56	30
UNFPA	32	30
UN-Habitat	68	47
UNICEF	32	23
UNOPS	36	20
UN-Women	32	20
WFP	72	60
UNRWA	16	27
UNU	28	17

Figure 1
Overview of RAM within selected United Nations entities



A. Heterogeneity of records producers' own practices in the absence of RAM programmes

55. The Inspector recognizes that many managers and other staff members make efforts on a daily basis to maintain evidence of their work, decisions taken or transactions made on behalf of their business units, sometimes under pressure or in challenging environments. The review highlighted, however, that these efforts are sporadic and often take place outside of any agreed and structured records management programme aimed at applying the corporate records management policies and principles through tailored processes for respective departments, offices or field offices.

56. For example, **at the United Nations Headquarters, only a limited number of departments and offices have developed their own classification and retention plans as directed by the ST/SGB/2007/5** (section 4.1). The ARMS website only shows a limited number of departments and organizational units which have developed such tailored RAM tools.[22] This situation has negative consequences in terms of adherence to corporate-issued retention and disposition schedules, where they exist.

57. ARMS itself warned about the difficulties in the implementation of policy principles in 2012, noting that it had become clear that too many offices did not have record-keeping capacity and had limited knowledge of United Nations rules pertaining to records and, therefore, a significant percentage of offices did not have a records management programme and did not undertake the systematic and regular transfer of records to ARMS. As a result, obsolete and inactive records with potential retention value were being stored in office space and valuable archives were not being identified and preserved. In addition, many temporary value records were kept beyond their destruction date, thereby occupying valuable storage space.[23]

58. In preparing this review, the Inspector came across a number of such internal assessments that highlighted the risks of current practices. One senior-level interviewee expressed the hope that the JIU report would serve as a "wake-up call" for his entity on that matter.

- At UNICEF, while preparing its joint business case to improve RM in 2012, the IT Solutions and Services Division (ITSS) and the Division of Human Resources (DHR) pointed out that the official staff records were at high risk and that current records management had already led to permanent and unrecoverable loss of staff files.[24]
- At ECA, over a period of 50 years since its creation, there has been no systematic or organized process to secure records and archives. In 2004, a consultant described a dumpsite for old records that were deposited with no indication of their content or of who had transferred them to archives. There were no search aids, no location tracking and no organized shelving for printed

[22] The list is available from ARMS internet site: https://archives.un.org/content/retention-schedules-un-offices.

[23] "Capital master plan and United Nations records: report and lessons learned by the Archives and Records Management Section", 2012.

[24] "Business case: electronic records management system and customer relationship management system", UNICEF, 2012.

material. Archives substantive records were mixed with library records, making it impossible to trace the substantive part of ECA work.[25] The consultant further warned that "incomplete files or corrupted data lead to incomplete or even loss of information and as such bring accountability and credibility problems, hamper decision-making and may lead to wrong assumptions and could delay programme delivery and as such compromise the organization and damage its reputation."

59. **The Inspector stresses the need to develop tailored records management programmes. In the absence of such programmes, staff are often left to decide what constitutes a record, if and how it should be kept, for what reasons, for how long, and whether there might be another reliable copy somewhere else.**

60. Often, the persons interviewed were satisfied with their current arrangements and related practices and were unaware that these may have created all kinds of risks for their entity. At the same time, the information gathered through questionnaires and surveys revealed that the implementation level of promulgated policy provisions was rarely seen as satisfactory. Less than half of respondents qualified RAM practices as "satisfactory" or "very satisfactory" when compared to policy principles, for both physical and electronic records. This demonstrates that information and records are not being maintained in a way that will ensure the existence of complete, accurate, reliable, accessible and durable evidence of the activities of the entity, in particular in electronic format, in the years or decades to come (see chap. V).

61. **There are a number of positive initiatives in the United Nations Secretariat aimed at reviewing RAM practices and developing retention policies**. For example, the Executive Office of the Department of Management (DM) and the Executive Office of the Office of Human Resources Management have started digitization programmes based on enhanced RM internal processes. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has made significant progress in preparing its services to comply with main policy principles, including a records management policy, a retention schedule and a file classification scheme in close collaboration with ARMS. ECA is also taking part in a project intended to drastically improve its RAM practices, starting with its Division of Administration. UN-Habitat has also developed a RAM programme at its headquarters.

62. The situation observed by the Inspector was often better in organizational units dealing with administrative and/or financial records than in units dealing with substantive or normative activities. This is mostly a positive heritage from the past when registries were in place. Fortunately, these administrative or financial units are among the biggest records producers. In these areas, the culture is also different as managers and staff members are more exposed to accountability, reliability and liability issues (to do with contracts and procurement processes, among other things) which triggers more attention to RAM.

Filing plan and retention schedules

63. There is currently no formal One-United Nations classification or filing system as has progressively been established in EC and elsewhere.[26] ARMS

[25] D. Zeller, Consultancy on records management (at ECA), interim report (2004).

[26] The common Commission-level retention list for European Commission files (CRL) is a regulatory document in the form of a retention schedule that establishes the retention periods for the different types of Commission files. The first version was adopted in July 2007.

produced a general document for the United Nations Secretariat entitled "Records common to most United Nations offices" (RCUN, 2000 revised in 2007),[27] which presents main classification categories of records and their related suggested retention periods, but this is limited to basic administrative records. This reference document also contains information on the office holding records and the authority involved in their disposition. ARMS also issued a set of guidelines in 2012 (File classification scheme for administrative functions common to United Nations offices).

64. Many of the officials interviewed at United Nations Headquarters were aware of the existence of RCUN and some used it for their own filing and retention. While other entities could make use of RCUN as a guide for their filing and retention schedules, reference was not explicitly made to RCUN in responses to the JIU questionnaire, which demonstrates that there is room for further sharing and ownership of this tool, for example in OAH or the regional commissions.

65. As its name suggests, **RCUN is limited to the common administrative items, even though it includes some level of detail. It does not support the management of substantive records specific to each department, regional commission or other organizational unit** according to their respective substantive activities and operational requirements. To develop such a tailored filing plan, which is a demanding undertaking, requires both an understanding of the business content and some RM expertise. Such plans do not exist as yet in many parts of the United Nations, which affects the quality of RAM practices.

66. The funds and programmes and other entities usually have a general corporate level classification scheme and leave the responsibility for its tailoring and implementation to the specific records producers and records owners, which is risky given their limited RAM expertise and resources. UNDP is expected to publish an information and classification handling policy in 2014.

Confidentiality, access and security

67. The approach taken by the United Nations with regard to confidentiality, access and security is based on the understanding that its work should be open and transparent, as stated in the ST/SGB/2007/6, "except insofar as the nature of information concerned is deemed confidential".[28]

68. The ISO 15489-1 stresses the need for organizations to have formal guidelines regulating access to records.[29] In 2012, ICA published the "Principles of Access to Archives",[30] which consists of ten principles providing archivists with an authoritative international baseline against which their existing access policy and practices should be measured. **The Inspector encourages the United Nations entities to undertake, possibly by mandating an independent study, a comparison of their existing access policy with these principles and to use them as a framework when developing new or modifying existing access rules to the archives in their custody**. Currently, these notions (permission levels, confidentiality and declassification process, etc.,) are covered either by provisions

[27] Available from ARMS internet site: https://archives.un.org/content/un-records-resources-and-tools.

[28] ST/SGB/2007/6.

[29] ISO 15489-1:2001(E), para. 9.7.

[30] International Council on Archives, Committee on Best Practices and Standards, Working Group on Access, AGM, 2012.

included in the main policy document or by separate guidelines. The points hereafter deserve additional specific comments:

- Access regulations were developed by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs in consultation with ARMS and the producing units. The Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/6 specifically covers issues related to sensitivity, classification and handling of information. The criteria for classification and declassification are clearly expressed as well as the levels of classification. However, the absence of any monitoring of their implementation combined with a lack of adequate training induces risks in this area, especially with regard to digital records.
- UNHCR access rules were developed by RAS in consultation with relevant units. However, they were never formally issued as part of the RAM corporate policy (inter-office memorandum) even though other regulations refer to them and incorporate their principles. In contrast to other organizations, these UNHCR guidelines give an increased role to the archivists to declassify documents or retain them as classified.
- The RAM policies of UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women lack a consolidated set of criteria to decide upon and support implementation of classification and restriction. Some of them, such as those applied by UNFPA, have included the development of information classification as part of an enterprise content management project. UNICEF has basic rules dating from 1983. Some of these entities refer to the applicable ST/SGB as their main reference document completed by in-house guidelines. ST/SGB/2012/3 concerning the international criminal tribunals is a good example of a tailored framework for the classification and secure handling of confidential information.

69. Having a RAM unit in place (e.g., in the United Nations Secretariat, UNOG, UN-Habitat and UNHCR) provides a reasonable level of assurance that rules are properly applied since archivists are able to control their implementation in a more consistent way, at least in relation to items under their custody. However, archivists pointed out that paper records are often transferred to them without security markings. This has a significant negative impact on their workload as pointed out by an experienced archivist who noted that "a page-by-page review is required to prevent disclosure of sensitive information". The same challenge is emerging in the management of digital archives.

Transfers

70. As seen earlier, some entities have in place a centralized archival programme to capture and maintain their physical archives in one repository (sometimes in different locations) while others keep such items spread throughout their departments or offices and units either as the result of conscious choice or as a default choice in the absence of any overarching vision. From the professional archivist point of view, it is clear that **archives should not be kept in the originating offices** as this does not enable the entity to protect them or make them publicly available at the appropriate time.

71. When transfer is required, there is inconsistency in implementation. Many archival items are neither identified nor transferred to any corporate repository by the organizational unit and records producers. According to ST/SGB/2007/5, the

responsibility to initiate the transfer of records relies on ARMS, which is simply not manageable. ARMS acknowledged that for the United Nations Secretariat, "the volume of records that should be transferred in relation to what is transferred is difficult to gauge however there are significant gaps in the United Nations archives". Such an assessment is probably most pertinent for the other entities as unveiled by the JIU survey: **more than 80 per cent of the respondent units declared that they maintain their own archival collection** (records kept for the purpose of institutional memory after the designated period of retention and internal use), which is a negative statement in terms of preserving institutional memory. When records are finally transferred, there is a risk of **significant backlog in processing (appraisal, disposal, etc.) owing to limited resources available in RAM units, in particular when physical records were not managed properly at the level of the organizational unit**.

72. The transfer of records to RAM units often happens for reasons such as office relocation, lack of space, change of managers rather than as a managed routine practice aimed at applying and benefiting from corporate principles. Table 2 reproduces information collected on the practices followed for physical records and electronic records, revealing a low level of commitment.[31]

Table 2
Transfer of physical and digital records

How often is the transfer of semi-current and/or non-current physical and/or electronic records for the appraisal and sorting in view of disposal/destruction organized in your unit?

	Physical records (percentage)	*Electronic records (percentage)*
According to the approved records retention schedule	52.5	40.0
Irregularly	32.5	15.0
On demand	30.0	25.0
On individual staff initiative	30.0	22.5
No transfer yet	12.5	17.5
Do not know	5.5	7.5

Source: JIU survey 2013, question 13.

73. **The ownership of records after the expiration of the retention period should be clarified as far as the United Nations Secretariat, including its offices away from headquarters (OAH) and regional commissions, is concerned.**

74. **In the absence of a centralized archival capacity,** records producers or records users are **left to decide which items should be transferred or destroyed.** This is a risk identified in the JIU survey: professional archivists do often not make the appraisal decision.

[31] Issues related to digital and electronic records are discussed in chapter V.

The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance control of and compliance with RAM policies and practices in the United Nations entities.

Recommendation 2

The Secretary-General and each of the executive heads of the United Nations entities covered by this report, as well as their senior managers, should be accountable for ensuring that all departments, offices and other entities under their responsibility have developed and apply the basic components of records management programmes to all records for which they have managerial responsibility.

B. Preservation conditions of physical "non-current" records and archives

75. The Inspector found that there are various arrangements for the conservation of non-current records and historical archives. Some entities have decided to store and maintain their collection in-house, usually in a number of storage rooms with uneven preservation conditions, while others have entered into corporate agreements with a third-party company to house their collections. The specific issues of the archives in field offices are raised in paragraphs 109-118.

76. Annex VI to the present report reproduces the information and figures gathered by JIU concerning printed archival collections and comments concerning the overall conditions in which they are maintained. The Inspector visited several in-house storage areas in New York, Geneva and Brussels (regional United Nations Information Centre). Despite all the efforts made, the current storage conditions across the United Nations are not entirely satisfactory as acknowledged by the archivists in their responses to the JIU questionnaire.[32] **There are a number of difficulties, as follows, which expose historical information to unacceptable risks that could lead to the loss or destruction of irreplaceable material**:

- **The storage space is insufficient to house all items transferred to the RAM dedicated units**. One should note that currently only a portion of records (difficult to estimate) are transferred. The RAM units would face an even more difficult situation if RAM practices were enhanced. The shelves, furniture and equipment are also not always fully adequate.
- **The storage conditions are often inappropriate**, including in terms of temperature control, lighting, ventilation, humidity and climate change, since the parts of United Nations buildings used for archives storage were not originally conceived and built with that function in mind.
- **Breaches in security aspects pose some risks**: sometimes the space available for keeping an archival collection is shared by or accessible to a variety of

[32] Document storage requirements for archives and library materials, ISO 11799 (2003), is the only existing standard; however, as such, it represents the lowest common denominator describing requirements in general terms.

staff members. This can lead to insecurity of the archives (unauthorized access and damage).

- The risk of force majeure circumstances or unexpected emergencies combined with **the absence of established disaster-preparedness plans relevant for the archives buildings** may also have negative consequences. The Inspector learned about several incidents in the Palais des Nations in Geneva (flooding of 2004) and the WFP headquarters in Rome (fire in 2012) showing that this aspect should be closely considered.

77. The archivists working in the United Nations are conscious of these challenges and strongly support the necessity to develop solutions aimed at improving the current situation. To have a clear picture of the situation in each entity, **the Inspector recommends that the Secretary-General and the executive heads of all the entities covered by this report, singly or together, commission a comprehensive independent study to assess the current storage conditions of the physical archival collections and make appropriate recommendations in a report to be presented to the governing bodies and/or relevant subsidiary bodies of their organizations, as well as to the United Nations General Assembly Committee on Information at its thirty-eighth session in 2016 at the latest**. UNOG Library Institutional Memory Section did so in 2004 to raise the awareness of senior management on the poor situation of the UNOG archives, although with limited impact.

78. UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women have opted for a third-party repository for their archives outside the borough of Manhattan in New York. They are expected to enjoy better preservation conditions, more in line with recognized standards. The Inspector could not ascertain the conditions but noted that the service-level agreements include provisions for adequate services in terms of storage and protection of items, including vital records. In line with this approach, it is even more important to have a strong RM programme in order to identify relevant permanent records, to dispose records at the prescribed time in order to avoid the extra cost of storing unnecessary items at the third-party premises and to be able to keep track of the archived items in a centralized manner to respond to internal or external demands and requests.

C. Insufficient expert capacity at the corporate level

79. RAM functions are often seen as support functions (this is obvious from the position of ARMS within the United Nations Secretariat under Central Support Service). Interviewed managers explained that operational activities might take precedence over functions that are perceived as less important. In times of financial crisis, or even customary budgetary restraints, as during the nineties, the trend has been to reduce the resources allocated to support functions; RAM is no exception, although the budgetary documents do not provide clear and relevant accounts in this regard. For many years, RAM functions were seen as unproductive and unattractive, thereby receiving limited attention and support from budgetary authorities. As demonstrated in chapter VI of the present report, it is, on the contrary, an area where opportunities for increased efficiency and savings do exist.

80. Annex IV shows the diversity of institutional arrangements and staffing that exist for RAM. The Inspector found that RAM units belong to the departments or

divisions responsible for management (support services), information management and library (knowledge management), information technology or even external relations, illustrating the absence of any clear and common vision on where such functions belong. Annex IV also highlights the lack of professional records management officers and archivists within the United Nations entities, even when a specialized unit is officially included in the organizational chart. The Inspector also noted with regret that there is no recruitment examination for this specialized professional area, which is particularly troubling as it limits the availability of such specific expertise at professional entry level. **This anomaly should be rectified in the future to enable significant improvements to take place. It is critical that the organizations bring on board appropriately qualified and experienced information management specialists who have a particular understanding of the different dimensions of records and archives management**.

Existing RAM units

81. Where a dedicated unit for records and archives management is in place in an entity, its core mandate includes, in addition to its custody role, a wide range of missions and functions, such as developing a policy framework, setting corporate standards and providing specialized advisory services. Occasionally, it may maintain electronic data and archives. In some cases, a RAM unit has an explicit role of raising and maintaining awareness, training, monitoring and overseeing but such functions are currently the exception, mostly owing to the lack of a clear corporate policy on the matter and lack of priority, and therefore resources, accorded to it.

82. The presence of a RAM unit, although it does not solve all relevant problems, provides significant leverage for increasing awareness of RAM within the entity concerned. It ensures the provision of professional guidance and the establishment of internal standards and can provide support to departments' or offices' initiatives upon request. On the basis of his visits and interviews, **the Inspector stresses the added value of establishing a dedicated unit with sufficient expertise to ensure corporate ownership.** While its financial means are limited, OHCHR illustrates the point in a concrete manner (box 3).

Box 3: Example of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Until 2011, OHCHR relied entirely on the UNOG Library Institutional Memory Section for RAM services until professional expertise was recruited in the General Administrative Services Section of OHCHR.

The recruitment of a Records Management Officer (RMO at P-3 level) had a positive impact on RAM practices at various levels of the entity. Since September 2011, a considerable amount of work has been completed in terms of a first time assessment of the Office's overall RAM situation. The RMO worked with several branches of OHCHR and secretariats of specialized human rights committees to raise awareness, explore records collection, identify challenges and suggest solutions. With the assistance of the UNOG Library Institutional Memory Section, the development of corporate tools was initiated, including the OHCHR classification plan and retention schedules. The RMO also prepared training materials and conducted briefings to raise awareness on RAM issues.

The RMO also prepared a comprehensive project paper drawing the attention of the Senior Management Team to RAM issues. The Team welcomed the project rationales and authorized fundraising activities to enable project implementation, but noted the budgetary constraints at the time of drafting this report, which made it difficult to extend the project to the whole Office. This shows the fragility of the situation and the need to institutionalize archives and records management expertise to ensure the sustainability of such positive developments.

83. There is no formally agreed or standard ratio of human or financial resources required to help in determining the minimum capacity necessary to ensure adequate records and archives management functions. These resources depend upon many different factors such as the size of the entity concerned, the nature of its mandate and activities, the amount and types of records produced or managed, the existence of automated tools available in-house to capture and manage records and the location of duty stations. Table 3 reveals the variation in upper and lower limits of resources assigned to archival functions at the national level. Some governments have published estimates of the resources devoted to archives management. The one issued by the "Direction Générale de la Modernisation de l'Etat" (DGME, France) deserves to have some of its observations reflected hereafter, in particular since it includes a comparative analysis among several developed countries and shows substantial differences between them in terms of the magnitude of dedicated resources for RAM.

Table 3
Resources for national public archival conservation, in full-time equivalent (FTE), in euros/year

	Minimum year	*Maximum year*
Cost per FTE (based on the budget spent for public archives conservation)	€50 000	€160 000
Estimated cost for archives conservation per linear kilometre (LKM)	€30 000	€170 000
Number of FTE employed per LKM of permanent archives maintained	1.25	1.6

Source: DGME, Modernization audit on record keeping, July 2007. Estimates based on country practices in Australia, Canada, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

84. In conducting the present review, the Inspector came across a few examples of quantifying the resources required to create or maintain such corporate capacity:

- In the case of OHCHR, more than 850 staff members and experts receive or produce records, not only at headquarters but also, and mostly, in the field where records have a high value for specific situations of infringements or risks for human rights. The OHCHR RAM project document[33] is based on the assumption that five positions are required to assist the project manager in developing and implementing the RAM programme: two professional staff members (a records management officer and an electronic records management system administrator) and three general service staff members (archives assistants). This internal capacity should be complemented by consultancy

[33] OHCHR, Records and Archives Project, 2011-2012.

services to assist with technological change and to monitor the progress of the project.

- At ECA (roughly 1500 staff members), the resources required to institutionalize RAM and create a dedicated unit were estimated at one professional post and three general service posts, representing $200,000 per year in salaries and allowances. The initial investment for the first year covering the equipment, software, supplies and renovation of certain building areas to be used for archiving would total around $500,000. The licensing fees for the necessary information management system were estimated at $50,000 per year.

85. The Inspector learned of several decisions to downsize or dismantle dedicated RAM units in recent years, including at WFP in 2007 and UNICEF in 2011, as a consequence of typical broader budget cuts and decisions to prioritize operations.[34] As these units had a keystone role in advising and monitoring RAM, such decisions had negative consequences and generated risks that exceeded by far the proportion of costs "spared" by such decisions. This raises the question of the net return on savings made by the suppression of a professionally competent dedicated RAM unit when compared with the costs incurred owing to medium-term and long-term risks generated by the absence of such a unit.

86. The Inspector also noted with concern the lack of visibility and credibility, and hence authority, of the existing dedicated RAM units within their respective environments. This significantly reduces the chance for proper awareness and correct implementation of regulatory principles. The respective heads of RAM sections are not recruited at director level, but at the P-5 level (including for the United Nations Secretariat). Even if grade is not a substitute for authority, this may undermine the work of the RAM teams in the eyes of their colleagues in middle-level management of substantive and IT branches whose full cooperation is required to have RAM policies implemented.

87. In contrast with the above, the NATO Archives have much higher visibility and credibility within the Organization, owing to its mandate of handling the declassification process for NATO information and its disclosure, a major subject of interest for the NATO governments in view of the Organization's activities. By virtue of that interest, the NATO Archives provide support to the "NATO Archives Committee", composed of representatives of member States with professional RAM expertise, which normally meets once a year to assist and advise the Organization on all archives-related and records-related matters, such as declassification, general guidance or digital preservation. It is among the few committees reporting directly to the highest governing body of the Organization (North Atlantic Council) and seems to satisfy the needs of the 28 member States and the in-house RAM team. The JIU team did not find any example of such a corporate archival committee in the United Nations context in spite of the fact that some United Nations Secretariat services, particularly in terms of the Security Council and the sanctions committees, also perform highly sensitive activities without benefiting from professional guidance on RAM.

[34] Meanwhile, an initial analysis for a reform of the RM system in WFP was carried out in 2009 and a feasibility study was produced in 2013.

Absence of RAM unit

88. In the absence of a dedicated unit, RAM functions fall under the responsibility of a variety of divisions, or parts thereof, in charge of administration, policy, technology and facilities. The Inspector deems that such a fragmented approach to record-keeping represents a denial of the concept of RAM, at a time when it is increasingly recognized as critical by public and private institutions and companies. As indicated above, the concept implies an overall vision and ownership of the entire records management and archival chains for physical and electronic records, as part of the information flows in the entity, and clarity on the way the respective roles and responsibilities of stakeholders are fulfilled and interact. The disaggregation of RAM functions between various units or individuals does not serve such a vision.

89. The present fragmented situation, in which records producers and owners are theoretically made responsible by the texts in force for ensuring proper records management in their own entities or services, creates a lack of certainty about whether records management programmes are in place and whether records of substantive, administrative, legal or historical value are captured and then transferred to a corporate repository as appropriate. Such a situation also raises the risk of non-compliance with policy provisions and does not provide a clear channel for the receipt of requests from external researchers (governments and scholars) to guide their research work.

D. Insufficient capacity at the level of organizational units

90. The Inspector found that the organizational units and records producers are ill equipped to deal successfully with the numerous and complex roles and responsibilities assigned to them. The JIU survey showed that only 50 per cent of the entities and departments surveyed had assigned RAM responsibilities to a specific officer or specific officers with appropriate delegated authority to coordinate and oversee the implementation of corporate policies concerning RAM. In the vast majority of cases, staff members as part of their broader functions, undertake RAM functions with limited time devoted to RAM, especially in demanding environments such as field offices. These individuals generally do not have an educational or professional background in RAM. Typically, general service staff members with an administrative profile (including in the field) or the substantive officers themselves deal with their own records. In the best-case scenario, information management or information systems officers with an IT background handle records.

91. In a number of cases, **networks of records focal points or records coordinators** have emerged and somewhat contributed to reinforcing RAM capacity at the level of their respective organizational unit. In the view of the Inspector, this is a good practice but **the presence of trained records management coordinators (RMCs), while pivotal, is clearly lacking in many entities**. Such networks represent a critical intermediate level between each organizational unit, its staff members and the dedicated RAM unit. These staff members, typically administrative assistants or in similar positions, must have a good knowledge of the operations of their organizational unit and its multifaceted documentation and should be the primary target for briefing and training.

92. In order to obviate the risk of their insufficient authority to promote sound record-keeping practices, their role should be clearly defined in specific and binding terms in promulgated policy texts, as is the case for UN-Habitat records coordinators. To overcome the risk of lack of authority, the World Bank strives to establish these focal points as middle managers (category H level) to have them better accepted as partners, including by the heads of departments, and this has been achieved in almost all cases.

93. To fill the gap of missing internal expertise, some departments have used consultancy services or benefited from the temporary secondment of professional expertise from ARMS, although the latter is it deprived of enough posts. For its RAM project, DESA selected its consultant in consultation with ARMS, which is a good practice.

Box 4: Example of the European Commission

EC has invested significantly in RM over the last decade. The budget allocated to each directorate-general, which are comparable to United Nations departments, includes resources that have to be devoted to RAM functions, in particular through the mandatory presence of at least one Document Management Officer (DMO) in each directorate-general.

These officers have formalized functions and required qualifications. The DMO is responsible, under the authority of the Director-General or head of service, for the first review of files and transfer to the historical archives. According to the size of the directorate and the amount of information managed, the DMO may be assisted by a variable number of staff members to guarantee effective records management aligned to policy principles and agreed procedures. A recent internal review estimated that a pool of 450 staff members with document management profiles was active within the EC (workforce of about 50,000 employees).

In terms of accountability, each Director General is identified as responsible for creating the conditions for proper records management within their directorate and, more importantly, is held accountable for it.

E. Insufficient integration of information-related functions

94. The United Nations Board of Auditors has expressed serious concerns about the handling of information and communications technology affairs in the United Nations Secretariat.[35] Among other strategic issues, the auditors addressed the reason for the lack of an integrated approach to information-related issues when they highlighted that "the designation of the Secretariat's most senior information officer as "Chief Information Technology Officer (CITO)" (rather than "Chief Information Officer" (CIO)) contributed to the expectation that the post would have a technical focus and encouraged technology-focused behaviours. As a result, the CITO and management directed insufficient attention to (a) the transformation, change or strategic leadership of the ICT function and (b) the development and enforcement of Secretariat-wide corporate guidance, frameworks, standards and policies".

[35] See A/67/651.

95. The way RAM issues are currently addressed in the United Nations entities is a striking example of a lack of a corporate multidisciplinary approach:

- The RAM unit is often disconnected from the knowledge management unit in the organizational structure while RAM should be an area of common endeavour.
- RAM is based on the organization of information and compliance rules while IT focuses on technical and operational effectiveness, and knowledge management and knowledge sharing deals with the capture, dissemination and updating of key concepts and lessons learned. Until recently, the three have not been easily reconciled and, as a consequence, RAM professionals, IT specialists and knowledge management officers rarely work hand-in-hand to build corporate projects using their respective professional strengths in synergy and with equal authority.
- Often the RAM unit deals with the physical records and the IT departments assume responsibility for digital records, in particular for content and document management processes, with little, but growing, attention to RM principles in back-up strategies. With the evolution of the technologies, one of the key aspects to keep in mind in the future is how to ensure that a balanced approach of expertise is applied for the management and preservation of digital archives.
- Nowadays, RM actions require technology-based solutions, provided and supported by IT experts. Records management officers and archivists need solid IT competencies to be able to face up to the challenges of their fast-evolving professions. At the same time, IT projects should integrate an RM component from the design stage to enable early and adequate management of digital assets.

96. The absence of an integrated approach has negative consequences, especially in the digital environment where records and the knowledge they carry are primarily digitally born. A more integrated approach to all information management-related aspects, including as documents management, records management, knowledge management, ICT management, would only bring about positive gains for the United Nations entities and would ensure that all projects conducted in this broad area are developed and implemented taking into account, and embedding, the respective policy frameworks and expertise concerned. It was therefore positive to note that views on this matter are changing in several entities, such as the United Nations Secretariat where a comprehensive knowledge management strategy is under preparation (2013, draft) and includes RM elements.

F. Implementation: lack of monitoring

97. Policy implementation cannot be sustained without monitoring of implementation and compliance checking. The very loose distribution of responsibilities in the main policy documents results in a lack of clear duties and specific guidelines, the implementation of which would need to be checked by internal and external auditors. Only recently, some entities (ECA, UN-Habitat and OCHA) identified and addressed this shortcoming by defining responsibilities in their own RAM policies. For example, the UN-Habitat policy on RAM points out

the responsibility of managers of divisions, branches, sections and offices to ensure that all staff in their business unit's implements the RAM policy. At OCHA, the Chief of the Communications and Information Services Branch is tasked with monitoring implementation of the RAM policy and needs to ensure that mechanisms are in place to conduct relevant audits.

98. This is a crucial point. As with any delegation of authority, ensuring proper implementation in a decentralized environment requires effective control. The trend of entrusting RAM functions to the records producers and records users (departments and other offices or decentralized entities in the field) should be accompanied by a reinforcement of competent monitoring on the way the established policy is being applied, which is not currently the case. As already mentioned, the few existing RAM units are not sufficiently equipped or funded to perform such tasks; where there is no RAM unit, the situation is even more extreme.

99. It is not surprising that the JIU survey reveals a low level of monitoring and control in this regard. Even when they claimed such controls existed, respondents failed to provide specific examples of effective practices.

Table 4
Monitoring effectiveness
(Percentage)

Please indicate the main procedures and controls in place to ensure that the unit and its staff members comply with RAM policies/procedures	*Yes*	*No*	*Do not know*
Monitoring by unit responsible for RAM at corporate level	43.6	33.3	23.1
Internal built-in controls	51.3	30.8	17.9
Internal/external oversight	38.5	30.8	30.8
Other	15.4	30.8	53.8

Source: JIU survey, question 30.

100. There is a need, therefore, to better control and monitor how RAM tasks are embraced by the organizational units, whether line managers have created appropriate conditions for adequate RAM practices and to what extent staff members comply with the rules and procedures. In October 2012, ARMS itself requested a formal audit of records management practices in the United Nations Secretariat to ensure that departments and offices were complying with ST/SGB/2007/5. The NATO Archives made a similar request for the organization's internal audit to verify how staff members were complying with the existing policies organization-wide.

101. Once RAM practices have been enhanced and better institutionalized, the Inspector would suggest introducing this aspect in the performance appraisal system of each staff member including managers as a mandatory assessment of how the respective stakeholders are complying with the established procedures.

102. A positive development would be for RAM units and oversight services to collaborate to produce a common RAM risk management tool that could be used for

audits and for other routine assessments. In the view of the Inspector, this would provide a good basis for self-assessment in the United Nations context.[36] The Inspector found similar good practices being implemented by national archives services, establishing self-assessment procedures for a number of public authorities. Since 2009, the United States' National Archives and Records Administration (NARA has been conducting and centralizing the results of a self-assessment on RAM performed by each United States government department. This helps the departments to better understand their responsibilities and assess whether or not their implementation is satisfactory before receiving any NARA conclusions and recommendations. Each exercise focuses on a specific RAM issue, such as vital records in 2011. The British National Archives developed a self-assessment tool divided into nine thematic modules providing support to analyse effective practices in line with the main elements of the guidance set out in the British records management code.

G. Limited awareness: need for outreach and training

103. The benefits of improved records management are often unclear to potential users. This generates resistance to changing the existing workflow or internal processes. Staff members and teams would often prefer to maintain their own filing systems and information management principles, convinced that they are best placed to assess what is most effective for and responsive to their own business needs. A lesson learned by the FAO team in charge of the corporate records management project is that the less the use of an RM system differs from staff members' habits, the best chances it has of being successfully deployed, adopted and maintained by its users and overcoming the resistance to change.

104. **ISO 15489 underlines the need for an entity to implement a training programme for all personnel who create records or use a records system** and stresses that, to be effective, the corporate training programme has to be **supported by the management.** There are two levels of training: the first concerns RM professionals for whom technological evolution makes it necessary to constantly upgrade their skills and competencies; the second concerns the staff at large, **starting with senior management.**

105. In comparison with the training opportunities that exist in other comparable international institutions (box 5), the present review highlights the need for significant training efforts to raise awareness about RAM in the United Nations entities. Official outreach channels tend to be limited to dealing with policy promulgation without any incentives attached, which results in a low level of consciousness about the importance of RAM and the main relevant applicable procedures.

[36] For example, ARMS produced a records management programme evaluation tool (2012).

Box 5: Examples of outreach and training in other international institutions

- The NATO training centre offers an information knowledge management course aimed at preparing information management managers, information knowledge management heads and information knowledge management support officers (and those serving in equivalent positions) for their duties, including a specific module designed and delivered by the NATO archivist.
- At EC, the comprehensive set of implementing RAM rules has been synthesized in a pedagogical way in the "E-Domec Toolkit, some handy tools for good document management",[37] published in May 2011 and widely disseminated among staff members of the secretariat.

106. The JIU survey showed that informal learning paths, such as on-the-job training, personal initiatives and advice from colleagues are the most common ways of developing knowledge about RAM principles and procedures. In their suggestions to JIU, respondents repeatedly requested more training and specific guidance.

107. In terms of training and outreach activities on RAM, ARMS conducts workshops at some OAH and regional commissions, OHCHR holds an annual workshop with country office representatives, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has organized an annual workshop for peacekeeping missions since 2007. The UNHCR Livelink/e-SAFE[38] manual (last version 2011) is a good example of a regularly updated tool, which provides fundamental information and practical instructions to foster compliance. These positive initiatives are, however, limited by severe financial constraints; RAM units rarely have funds available for outreach and training activities and are often limited to presenting RAM theoretical guiding principles. This situation is not satisfactory as RAM has practical dimensions that should not be neglected and require hands-on exercises in face-to-face sessions in the work place. The benefits resulting from enhanced RAM practices, including for staff members themselves should be better explained in training sessions.

108. Where available, the guidance material produced by RAM units is not disseminated or tested in the entities beyond a handful of interested persons. For example, despite being posted on its Internet, the guidance and tools produced by ARMS are certainly not used in a manner commensurate to the investment made in their preparation. Another example in the United Nations Secretariat of such limited outreach is **the time allocated to the introduction of incoming staff members to records management matters**: a "generous" five-minute slot during a one-week induction programme!

109. In order to improve awareness about RAM and enhance adequate skills, training programmes should be strengthened and their focus adapted to their respective audiences: (a) senior managers for RAM advocacy as they play (positively or negatively, including by example) a key role as regards implementation; (b) staff

[37] Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/archival-policy/docs/edomec/recueil_dec_mda_en.pdf.
[38] UNHCR rebranded its EDRMS solution, "Livelink", deployed in 2001, as "e-SAFE" in 2013.

assigned to RAM tasks for procedures and compliance aspects; and (c) staff-at-large for general awareness and expected individual behaviour.

The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance the efficiency of RAM practices in the United Nations entities.

Recommendation 3

The Secretary-General and each of the executive heads of the United Nations entities covered by this report should ensure that appropriate time and resources are allocated to institutionalizing tailored RAM training programmes delivered by experienced RAM experts, both at headquarters and in the field, to (a) senior and middle-level managers; (b) records coordinators and other staff involved in RAM activities; and (c) staff at large.

H. Additional challenges for field-based entities

110. The United Nations field entities, including peacekeeping missions, as well as funds and programmes operate in difficult environments and, therefore, face additional challenges in terms of policy compliance, professional capacity and adequacy of tools. Owing to financial constraints, for the purposes of this report field locations were only covered by audio-visual interviews with field officials and by the responses provided to the JIU survey that largely included field entities.

111. Both sources pointed to the insufficient attention paid to records produced, received and stored in the field. It was clear that officials at headquarters offices had limited understanding regarding how decentralized offices were handling their records, identifying and transferring those of supposed permanent interest to their headquarters. For entities that have a RAM unit, it provides a partner for policy advice, technical guidance or training, but its influence is limited by shrinking resources and the absence of RAM counterparts in the field. Often, RAM-related missions by RAM officials from headquarters to the field are either cancelled owing to a lack of financial resources or they have to be funded by the field office itself.

112. As a consequence, RAM practices in the field are even more dependent on individuals' awareness and practices. Regional or country offices often lack the minimum capacity to conduct adequate practice or, as mentioned in a number of internal assessments, have demonstrated limited interest in RAM in comparison with other (legitimate) preoccupations.

Department for Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support

113. In theory, ARMS is the custodian of the peacekeeping operation archives. In the past, the Advisory Committee has expressed concerns, in particular on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), concerning the conditions of closure of former peacekeeping operations. Often, the disorder of files dumped in containers prolonged for years the maintenance of both operations files and teams in charge of the financial data reconciliation, making RAM progressively more difficult over time. As a consequence, DPKO and the Department of Field Support (DFS) and ARMS have made serious joint efforts over the last decade to improve the situation.

114. Among the United Nations departments, DPKO and DFS appear to be the precursors for the establishment of a department-wide RAM programme. RAM was identified as being of key importance, both in terms of accountability and lessons learned, for peacekeeping stakeholders of all kinds. The strong jointly developed RAM programme for DPKO and DFS is based on a common policy directive on records management (2006, amended 2009)[39] completed by specific provisions concerning classification and distinct retention schedules at headquarters and operations sites (see annex II). The DPKO Liquidation Manual, providing guidance in the preparation and execution of liquidation plans for peacekeeping missions, includes some provisions concerning records management and archiving.

115. In the past, particularly with the upsurge in the number, size and complexity of peacekeeping operations in the early 1990s, **a significant number of records, including on especially politically sensitive issues, were lost or destroyed and were not preserved as historical archives**. Such missions now have in place a total of 14 records centres that are supposed to capture the records produced or received. The chiefs of staff of peacekeeping missions hold the programmatic responsibility for overseeing their mission's information management activities. Additionally, the office of the chief of staff maintains a monitoring role with regard to records management and information management practices. Records centres constitute a positive development, without a doubt, but they represent a relatively recent phenomenon and a number of difficulties to do with their operation remain:[40]

- Records centres mainly capture administrative records; therefore, **insufficient attention is paid to records of a political, and hence historical, nature**. In addition, there is a dichotomy between the civilian and the military parts of peacekeeping missions in terms of management of information and records, with the military side appearing not to be involved in records centres.
- **Records centres mainly process paper-based items** while digital records are handled by the information technology component of the mission.
- **Professional capacity remains limited**: as of 2013, five professional information management officers were deployed across 17 active peacekeeping missions. Most of the time, records centres rely on a limited number of local staff members.

116. A key factor in further improving RAM practices in peacekeeping operations is the presence of core RAM capacity at the initial stage of deployment of the mission to ensure that adequate practices are in place from day one of the mission until its closure. Ensuring such an ideal situation depends on the resources available and whether the information management capacity is not redirected for operational motivations to other functions such as information technology. Recent common efforts by ARMS and DPKO/DFS to manage missions' records upstream using records centres, helped in reducing the number of records transferred to ARMS as the final custodian of peacekeeping archives, which improved the efficiency of the process.

[39] DPKO and DFS Policy Directive: Records Management, January 2006, amended 2009.

[40] Prepared based on information received from ARMS and DPKO or found in the OIOS survey 2011 on records management in peacekeeping operations.

Funds and programmes and other entities

117. During the review, a number of interviewees from the field offices stressed that RAM policies were developed without taking into consideration the specificities of such offices, a fact which the Inspector recognizes with regret as a pattern that recurs in many aspects of the administrative changes in the United Nations, particularly in ICT projects, the most typical being IMIS (headquarters-focused for years). On the other hand, each administrative unit tends to believe that it is more special than any other.

118. At UNDP and WFP, the RAM policy gives autonomy to the field entity, either country offices or regional bureaus. The officials interviewed at their respective headquarters candidly recognized that each of the existing field entities may have developed its own processes and practices for managing and storing documents and records. They stressed that it is the responsibility of the managers of a field office to ensure compliance with established RAM principles. The Inspector emphasizes that **such delegation should be accompanied not only by strict internal control mechanisms and clear procedures but also by strengthened local record-keeping capacity** to support substantive work and ensure transparency and accountability.[41] These efforts, while adding to operational and financial constraints, would bring about major benefits.

119. In contrast, while they also have many teams of staff in the field, OHCHR, UNHCR and UNICEF keep their archives in a centralized manner at their respective headquarters.

- In theory, the OHCHR records management officers or the staff of the UNHCR RAS should provide support to field offices before and at the time of closure or downsizing, but this is impaired by the lack of resources to monitor implementation or to conduct appraisal missions.
- At UNHCR, staff members in offices where Livelink/e-SAFE is deployed are responsible for entering records in the central repository, which is an effective approach and could be a model for other entities provided that each organizational unit is connected to a central gateway system. Livelink/e-SAFE is implemented fully and used extensively at UNHCR headquarters, the Budapest Service Centre and in the European region, and has ad hoc implementation in other locations (i.e., Canada, Jordan, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, etc.). In each country with a UNHCR presence, at least one focal point has access to upload information in the system. User acceptance of the system has been growing steadily since 2008 when the system became accessible through the Internet; at present RAS is receiving an increasing number of requests to provide access to Live link/e-SAFE to colleagues, consultants and implementing partners in the field.
- At UNICEF, in the event of the closure of an office, its archives and records are transferred to UNICEF headquarters.

[41] Since its mission to WFP, JIU has been informed that RAM aspects are covered by the assurance statements made by regional and country directors on their internal controls, including on compliance with all corporate policies. Although not limited to RAM, further controls include regular field audits performed by internal audit and an external auditor, which may include a review of RM practices in the areas being audited.

I. Towards increased coordination within the United Nations

120. In the past, several attempts have been made to address RAM issues in a more harmonized way at various locations. These efforts have been fragmented, however, and produced limited results, probably because of a lack of political momentum and preconceived ideas that such issues only concern archivists.

- Following previous attempts and initiatives, in 2004 the Working Group on Archives and Records Management which reported to the United Nations Development Group's Task Force on Common Services, permitted an information exchange among New York-based entities, notably concerning their respective policies and procedures and the technology used. The entities cost-shared consultancy fees to conduct two main projects on professional aspects (appraisal, retention and the value of records for historical value) and on digital preservation. The Working Group has not been active since 2007. Its main achievements were limited to information sharing and the issuance of working papers on substantive professional issues, including on the digital archives.

- Established in 2003, the United Nations Organizations Records and Archives Managers Group is composed of the archivists of Geneva-based entities of the United Nations system. It operates intermittently and provides a forum for cooperation and professional exchange among heads of sections and their staff.

121. The Working Group on Archives and Records Management of the Common Services Management Team in Nairobi was established in February 2011 with the objective of assisting United Nations entities in Nairobi with their RAM programmes. While interest in RAM among the group has always been positive, its membership has fluctuated from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 17 different organizations present on the Gigiri compound of the United Nations Office at Nairobi and outside. Its terms of reference (2013) highlight five primary goals: to establish a community of practice in Nairobi; to develop training; to link with the broader United Nations system community of practice; to provide advisory services and to raise awareness among managers and staff. From its inception, the Group's strong focus was on sharing knowledge and best practices, and training and the development of studies for the benefit of Nairobi-based offices. With the strong input of the UN-Habitat team, several entities have been able to make significant progress towards the rationalization of their RAM practices and the disposal of obsolete records. UN-Habitat is the only Nairobi-based entity with an established RAM policy. Among the other Nairobi-based entities, the situation is heterogeneous: headquarters, regional or country offices have different levels of autonomy and variable support from their respective corporate executive heads, which does not facilitate a common approach.

122. ICA established a "Section of International Organizations" (SIO) in 1976, with the aim of strengthening relations between archivists and records management officers of international organizations as well as between all institutions, professional bodies and other organizations or persons concerned with the custody, organization or administration of archives and records of international origin, public or private.[42] Its composition goes beyond United Nations system organizations and also includes

[42] See the Section of International Organizations of ICA available from: http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ica_sio.

individual members.[43] UN-Habitat is a member of the section as an organization and is in the process of registering with ICA. ICA also counts individual UN-Habitat RAM staff among its members. Apart from this exception, the Inspector noted with regret that the various United Nations funds and programmes are not members of the section despite the fact that it provides opportunities for professional networking and information exchange. However, unlike other useful professional gatherings, it does not allow issues specific to the United Nations to be addressed other than in informal settings. Over the years, the section's recommendations have repeatedly flagged a number of key points that should be considered by United Nations entities to enhance RAM practices in line with the example set by other international organizations, which have achieved some success. This presupposes a respectful dialogue between the professional records management officers and archivists and their respective executive management.

123. Various technology-based user groups are active. Since 2002, the Electronic Document and Records Management Systems User Group for International Organizations has brought together Europe-based international organizations using OpenText solutions to manage information, records and archives. The purpose of the group is threefold: (a) to share experiences of Open Text Records Management solutions; (b) to produce coordinated responses and requests for future developments of relevant OpenText products; and (c) to help manage the user's relationship with OpenText. In the same spirit, the Documentum Informational Organizations Sharing Network serves as a network to exchange information on software developments, to share technical questions and to conduct negotiations with the supplier EMC. Entities using SharePoint have also created a community of practices.

124. The absence of any institutionalized coordination mechanism among the United Nations entities, and beyond at the United Nations system level, is troubling since, as is pointed out in this report, these entities are all currently facing similar types of challenges and technical issues. Such a mechanism would help the entities to collectively address RAM issues and define common strategies. In the view of the Inspector, at this crucial time **there can only be a benefit in creating a structured and formal network of professionals responsible for RAM in the different parts of the United Nations system to promote a common approach and ensure alignment with those strategies**.

V. The challenge of digital archives

A. Most digital files are currently not managed as records

125. There is no doubt that the emergence of new technologies has significantly contributed to improving United Nations programmes, services and operations. Most documents are now born digital or scanned. The main challenge for the United Nations, as for many other large institutions, is to capture and manage its digital records beyond regular backup and storage strategies. **Records management has not been given the attention required in the transition to the digital environment**. The consequence is alarming: **20 years of digital records and related archives are at**

[43] A list of members of the Section of International Organizations is available from: http://www.ica.org/?lid=2806&group1=26.

risk and access to them may have been lost despite the fact that they are stored somewhere on a server of some type.

126. ISO 15489-2 describes the differences between handling paper records and electronic records at the various steps of the RM process. **One of the main differences is that RAM-related actions concerning the capture, classification, access and disposition have to be taken at the point of creation of digital items**. This is particularly important in relation to the metadata attached to records. Such action is not customary in many United Nations entities and, as a result, there is no assurance that an electronic occurrence of a record can be regarded as the master or certified official version.

127. The results of the JIU survey and the comments provided during interviews highlighted the extreme diversity of ways in which digital or electronic records are currently captured and stored by records producers and records users using various information systems. Individual drives, shared drives, laptops, USB keys, local or shared databases, intranets, web-based content repository, among others, are all used but are not **configured in accordance with agreed common principles and criteria for classification and retention guiding principles which are, together with the access rules, the basic features of records management**. In most cases, ICT divisions then back up these ICT aggregated elements.

Table 5
Means of storage for digital documents and records
(Percentage)

(In the absence of ERMS) Do you use other information management systems in your unit?	
	Yes
Individual drive	91.7
Shared drive	92.3
Shared database	78.8
Content management systems (CMS)	39.3
Document management system	37.9
Online repository (clouds, etc.)	15.4
Other information systems	26.3

Source: JIU survey, question 23.

128. Records management officers confirmed that the current situation is not satisfactory since the IT devices used for storage do not enable staff to manage electronic records through their life cycles. **They highlighted the related inherent risks in terms of integrity, security and authenticity as records can easily be deleted and moved around while users' actions cannot be traced appropriately; replications are commonly performed and there is no control over access to them and the records creation process**.

129. The respondents to the JIU survey recognized these difficulties, almost 50 per cent of who stated that the current situation did not enable effective records management. Comments gathered also highlighted that electronic records are rarely

deleted when they have reached the end of their prescribed retention period and they are not transferred to any official corporate repository. This type of electronic storage should be composed exclusively of e-files of permanent value (legacy data) for which it would be subsequently easier to apply long term preservation strategies.

130. **The multiple repositories are in the hands of various individuals** with a high risk of loss of relevant information when any of the staff leaves his or her post. Such multiplicity and exclusivity also have a negative impact on knowledge management and knowledge sharing, which is de facto restricted across the entity; such local systems are often exclusive in terms of access although their content could be useful to other parts of the entity. One records management officer explained candidly that she realized how much the substantive themes of each section of the entity she worked for were interrelated and that staff members could benefit significantly from accessing information handled by their counterparts if this was made available in a managed repository.

Box 6: Specific case of e-mail messages and their attachments

E-mail messages and attachments are potential records for any organizational unit and are therefore, in theory, subject to statutory record-keeping requirements as recognized in particular by ST/SGB/2007/5. Annex V to the present report indicates the entities that have promulgated specific policies or guidelines concerning electronic messaging. Some have not yet promulgated a specific policy or refer to a broader ICT administrative circular. At the United Nations Secretariat, it seems that a draft policy has been under preparation for several years but has not been officially published as of yet. Many of these specific policies focus on the usage of electronic messaging as ICT resources and indicate how it may or may not be used within an organization (personal/official use, confidentiality, procedures for attachments and their size, characteristics of mailboxes, anti-spam measures, etc.). However, a few policies prescribe which messages are considered to be electronic records and how these must be managed in terms of retention, classification schemes, disposal and security) and through which process some should be further kept as archives. The most detailed policy in this regard is applied by UNHCR, which benefits from its Livelink/e-SAFE application and gives a role to the Records and Archives Section (RAS) on that matter. For the United Nations Secretariat, ARMS produced guidelines on managing e-mails as records that are available on its website but the guidelines are not easily accessible and they cannot be enforced. WFP manual includes provisions on electronic messaging. Indeed, this review confirmed that nowadays managing e-mails in the other United Nations entities mainly means keeping backups of all messages and their attachments indiscriminately with little information about what is saved and why. In fact, the driving consideration behind the deletion of e-mail messages is not their value as a record **but the IT capacity of the supporting server or even the choice of individuals. Only rarely is this digital repository exploited as a record environment. One should note that the proportion of this massive amount of information that represents authentic records with medium-term or long-term value to the organization is indeed relatively small (roughly estimated at 5 per cent of the total messages exchanged). Although easy and quick retrieval should be one of the main benefits of a RAM programme, the following examples demonstrate the practical difficulties and the risks generated by the absence of**

dynamic management, even though all users do not perceive these difficulties: When leaving his post, the executive head of an international organization passed on to the archive section in one single folder all the electronic messages he had exchanged during his entire term of office! Since September 2011, UNDP e-mails are all stored at the United Nations International Computing Centre with a blanket provisional 7-year retention period, but they are neither classified or identified nor categorized. UNDP is therefore dependent on the Centre's search tools and filters for the retrieval of any stored information. At DPKO, messages are archived for 10 years on servers at the United Nations Logistics Base at Brandish under the same conditions. Given the increasing prevalence of electronic messages in support of business transactions and substantive decisions, there is an urgent need to establish policies that address the management of e-mails as records. **This is a precondition to be able to fully integrate them in any electronic records management framework from the time of their creation, already stated as critical. For example, some of the EDRMS already in place (Unite Docs or Livelink/e-SAFE) have a "drag and paste" option that enables easy and early integration.**

B. Need for information management systems with records management functionalities

131. As a paradoxical consequence, many born-digital records are currently printed solely for archival purposes as suggested in ST/SGB/2007/5. In the absence of a long overdue alternative digital record-keeping system, this is a cautious approach chosen by managers and staff who have a basic awareness of RAM principles. It is, of course, environmentally unsound and inefficient (a waste of time and resources). The printouts of the digital records are entered into individual or collective (unit, department, entity) paper-based established RAM systems. This process represents a way of mitigating risks until an appropriate system is in place, but it is not ideal as the records are taken out of their original context and important information such as metadata can be lost. Sometimes, this practice is even directed by policy documents, as in the case of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which recognizes e-mail as an official means of communication but its relevant directive states explicitly that staff should be placing on file a hard copy for reference purposes.

132. In the context of the continuing United Nations reform, the move towards a greener and paperless administration by relying more on electronic formats and the use of digital signatures constitutes a main axis for modernizing administrative processes. The Inspector noted that ARMS is not closely associated with this reform process, despite the impact of its work on the manner in which the Secretariat will manage its records. **In the absence of a widely deployed information system with RAM functionalities, it would be a risk to privilege the usage of electronic or digital records and reduce printouts.**

133. Despite the fact that several United Nations entities are committed to moving from paper-based to digital record-keeping and archiving solutions, in reality a significant number of United Nations business processes remain paper-based for various reasons, including legal requirements (for evidence and authenticity in courts), operational matters requiring written signatures, cases where local partners

lack digital record-keeping) or just for the convenience of staff working with documentation (lawyers were often quoted).

134. In order to address the risks related to digital or electronic records and to be prepared to address the question of the medium-term and long-term preservation of relevant digital items, it is essential that the United Nations and its associated entities make decisive progress in selecting and implementing information management systems with RAM functionalities. Efforts to equip the entities with corporate-wide EDRM systems are only nascent and decisions have yet to be translated into sustained actions. The most advanced of the United Nations entities in this regard is the UNHCR, which has progressively implemented its live link/e-SAFE EDRMS since 2001, and to a certain extent WFP.

135. EDRMS are among the content management systems that combine document management and records management technologies. They serve to manage documents and records throughout the document life cycle, from creation to destruction, in line with, among other things, the shared classification principles, retention schedules and access principles in force in the entity.

136. **ISO 15489 emphasizes that any records management system should be aiming at storing records that are authentic, reliable, integral and usable**. EDRMS is a prerequisite in this regard and is part of the solution to enable management, preservation and provision of access to digital/electronic records but it is not the ultimate solution. **The Inspector draws attention to the following indispensable conditions for an effective and successful move to, and use of, EDRMS**:

- RAM policy principles are clearly expressed and mastered across the entire organizational unit of records producers, notably through the use of a unique filing scheme and corresponding common retention schedules for administrative records (for which RCUN can serve as a basis) but more importantly for substantive records that are likely to be specific to each organizational unit according to the entity's core mandate and activities.
- Management (and foremost senior management) is supportive.
- Staff participation in record keeping is secured through awareness raising and training (facilitated by a user-friendly process implying a minimum of changes compared with traditional professional habits).

137. It is not the objective of this report to advocate for one system in particular. The market for content management systems is sufficiently diverse and offers various options that can be assessed against operational needs, main workflows, IT infrastructure and devices already deployed in each entity or sub-entity as well as against the magnitude of future investment and maintenance costs. The system deployed must adhere to a minimum set of professional and technical requirements (ISO standards, see annex III) constituting the baseline for a credible records management system. In the same spirit, ARMS prepared a list of such requirements for the United Nations Secretariat in 2003.[44] In this context, the Inspector draws attention to the fact that the SharePoint RAM functionalities (which vary according

[44] Standard on functional requirements for record-keeping systems in the United Nations Secretariat, 2003, available from the ARMS website: https://archives.un.org/sites/archives.un.org/files/Standard_Functional%20Req_RKS3.pdf.

to the version of the software) have to be carefully assessed, as there is no consensus in the professional community on whether it provides sufficient alignment with RAM requirements.

Table 6
Examples of main companies and information management systems

Companies	*Software solutions*
EMC corporation (United States)	Documentum
Open Text (Canada)	Livelink
IBM (United States)	Filenet
Oracle (United States)	Universal Records Management (URM)
Microsoft (United States)	SharePoint
Hewlett Packard (United States)	TRIM
Open source solutions	Alfresco, etc.

138. The Inspector stresses that it would be highly preferable to work on a common or compatible technical platform to avoid, at least within the boundaries of the United Nations, the lack of interactivity and compatibility that has characterized ICT since the 1980s. That situation has led to high costs and waste in terms of procurement, consultancies and efficiency, as has often been pointed by the ACABQ.

139. One point should be clear: any technological tool should serve policy objectives and not the reverse, in spite of the lobbying directed at managers by some vendors and consultants. As stressed by the FAO project, technology-driven solutions usually fail. In this context, it is essential that the underlying RAM process and the requirements of organizational units be analysed before selecting, customizing (if needed) and deploying any EDRMS.

140. As for any major investments in technology, the total ownership cost concept requires that attention should be given during the preparation of the business case for the selection of an EDRMS (or any further digital repository solutions) to all aspects of the case from the cost of acquisition/customization and the costs of operation over the life of any information system purchased and implemented.

United Nations Secretariat

141. As early as 2007, ST/SGB/2007/5 identified the creation of EDRMS to manage e-records for the United Nations Secretariat as the right move. The serious problems and delays in developing and implementing the fully-fledged United Nations Secretariat Enterprise Content Management solution (ECM) under Documentum negatively affected progress on this matter. The Inspector learned with serious concern that some pioneering projects aimed at dealing with digital records (including in UN-Habitat) had to be put on hold for that reason in 2007-2009, negatively affecting any local progress.

142. The Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT) Knowledge Management Section produced a corporate solution designed to serve all departments and offices of the Secretariat. In the view of OICT, Unite Docs should serve as the final resting place of documents and records, containing the authoritative source of information for departments, such as approved documents and final versions of reports.

143. In October 2012, a study commissioned by the United Nations Secretariat and conducted by Forrester Consulting made a comparative analysis of three of the major content management systems available on the market and already deployed in some parts of the Secretariat, namely Documentum (ECM), Filenet (IBM) and SharePoint (Microsoft). The Inspector appreciates that ARMS was considered as a one of the key stakeholders in this review and that RM was among the nine priorities retained for the assessment of the products. These were assessed against a set of organizational imperatives, including document management, workflows, imaging and records management. JIU was unable to confirm or object to the conclusion of the study in favour of the Filenet option owing to the lack of documents regarding quantitative and financial elements of the cost-benefits analysis shared with the Unit. A major positive point made by the consultant was that any ECM system should support records management capabilities for both electronic and paper items.

144. **Although Unite Docs was designed according to ARMS functional requirements, as of August 2013 it had only been deployed in a limited number of departments**, representing a couple of hundred active users, while it could and should be used by at least 10,000 staff members. The deployment of the application requires an investment from the user unit or department, as it is necessary to establish a filing plan and corresponding retention schedule before launching it. The current small-scale deployment is a concern as the investment made by OICT during recent years to make the system available has been significant.[45]

145. The Inspector found that, in addition to Unite Docs, a number of other systems were in use throughout the Secretariat and were often presented by their owners as having RM functionalities when in fact they do not.

Table 7
Examples of EDRMS in selected organizational units in the Secretariat

	Organizational unit	*Since*
Unite Docs	Executive Office of the Department of Management	2012
Unite Docs	Executive Office of the Department of Public Information (roll-out in the entire department scheduled for autumn 2013)	2012-2013
Unite Docs	Executive Office of OHRM	2012

[45] The investment made to develop Unite Docs included: (a) software costs (US$282,500); (b) recourse to external consultancy services (US$ 150,000); and (c) deployment of internal staff representing 12 person-months. In 2013, three full-time equivalent posts were providing support to Unite Docs.

	Organizational unit	*Since*
Unite Docs	Communications and Information Management Service of DESA (roll-out for the entire department scheduled for spring 2014)	2012-2013
Unite Docs	The Institutional Memory Section of the UNOG Library as a pilot for Geneva	2012
TRIM	ARMS for its record-keeping and archives management for managing physical records	
TRIM	ECA (Division for Administration)	2013
TRIM	Deployed on the initiative of information management officers in several DPKO missions	
Corlog	Used in various organizational units for incoming and outgoing files in chronological order, for example at the Executive Office of the Secretary-General	
Xthos	Used in various organizational units, for example in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management	
Lotus Notes	A number of organizational units have developed their own databases using the Lotus Notes application to organize their records and documentation. For example, the Secretariat of the Security Council	
COSMOS	DPKO developed this framework application to automate collaborative management, including records management, for the full life cycle of documents	2013
Various internal SharePoint applications	Used in various organizational units, including in peacekeeping missions and field offices	

146. The Inspector was pleased to learn that more than 15 client groups are lining up to use Unite Docs. However, in the absence of a corporate strategy to mandatorily deploy Unite Docs, the OICT Knowledge Management Section is struggling to convince potential users because:

- Outreach activities about Unite Docs' features and possible benefits are too limited to create awareness and generate interest among its clients (departments and offices).
- Departments and offices remain autonomous and have often decided to limit themselves to their own information management applications, which are perceived as best adapted to their needs. In some cases, departments looking into Unite Docs have decided against it, for example owing to network connectivity problems.
- In 2013, the change of platform behind Unite Docs to Filenet (IBM) has created delays and uncertainty for users. The transition, considered necessary

by the OICT Knowledge Management Section to better address specific requirements regarding integration and user interface, is now well under way to be completed by the end of 2013.

- Interviewees expressed technical concerns about the servers being maintained at New York headquarters thereby limiting the timing of their support to within New York working hours. This was particularly worrying for entities with field offices in different time zones that require a quick response in case of breakdown. The Inspector was pleased to learn that, in the light of these remarks, OICT decided that one European technical platform would be hosted as of 2014 in the United Nations Enterprise Data Centre in Valencia, Spain, serving various regions.
- ARMS itself is using another system: TRIM.

Box 7: Example of UNHCR EDRMS: Livelink/e-SAFE

UNHCR is without a doubt the most advanced entity in terms of the management of digital records. UNHCR deployed its corporate EDRMS (Livelink/e-SAFE) at its headquarters as early as 2000 and subsequently in its country offices in the European region and beyond. This RM system has been adopted by a number of comparable international institutions.

RAS is overseeing the use of the application. The UNHCR senior archivist estimated that about 60 per cent of the records produced at the UNHCR headquarters and field offices covered are captured and processed via Livelink/e-SAFE.

The plans for further deployment of the system to other regions were delayed as a result of the decision to implement SharePoint, notably using its collaborative management features. In March 2013, UNHCR launched a project to explore options for the integration of Open Text and Microsoft SharePoint for use in UNHCR offices, with the goal of enhancing governance of global information assets. Essentially, the aim was to make SharePoint the interface for end users while Live link/e-SAFE would be the document repository.

Funds and programmes and other entities

147. WFP has made progress towards a corporate Electronic Records Management Programme concerning its institutional memory records. The programme was rolled out at headquarters and in field offices gradually after 2004. The objectives were threefold: (a) to create an environment for information sharing within WFP and especially between the headquarters and the field; (b) to capture and store e-mail messages in a secure repository; and (c) to establish common records management rules and procedures applied across the whole entity. The cornerstones of the Electronic Records Management Programme were the electronic registry systems and the corporate file plans based on the functional classification scheme for WFP records. WFP indicated that roughly 40 to 50 offices in the field were using the system in 2013.

148. As a newly created entity, UN-Women requested its Information Systems and Telecommunications Division to develop an ERMS, using Microsoft SharePoint

2013, as a matter of priority. UN-Women considers that, given its limited size, the SharePoint option is suitable to meet its RAM requirements.

149. UNFPA has invested considerable time and money in the development of ECM under Documentum over the last five years. While the project looked promising in 2008-2010, it encountered a number of internal difficulties, including the lack of an integrated approach, to say the least, among several key internal partners. The lack of internal agreement on processes and workflows and the absence of an agreed set of metadata led to the project being suspended pending the evaluation and advice on the way forward from a consulting company. The consultant recommended continuing the development and customization of Documentum, notably taking into consideration the significant investment already made. A decision on the future of the project is on hold pending review and approval by the Executive Committee.

150. UNDP has started to look into this issue and is working to create an EDRMS using SharePoint, which is meant to integrate document management features in records produced with SharePoint.

151. UNOPS identified the deployment of an EDRMS as a strategic priority for 2013-2014 and the management of UNOPS considers that some components of such a system are already in place. Therefore, the option presented to its Executive Board in June 2013 was to internally develop a technical umbrella for the existing systems containing records rather than purchasing a market application for which the customization cost and effort would be enormous. While the Inspector welcomes the economic reasoning behind this approach, the risk is high that a system built in this way would not comply with the RAM requirements contained in this report and would, in fact, turn out to be costly in the long run.

The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance the effectiveness of RAM in the United Nations entities.

Recommendation 4

The Secretary-General and each of the executive heads of the United Nations entities covered by this report should ensure that information systems that capture, create or manage e-records meet international standards for record keeping and the preservation of digital records and archives.

C. Integration of EDRMS with other corporate information systems

152. As a positive development, United Nations organizations are equipping themselves with enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems for streamlining business and transactional operations.[46] **ERP systems capture evidential information about business transactions and sometimes-related documents, but not those produced in the context of more substantive work of probable future historical interest**. It has been argued in this report that the notion of records is much broader than merely transaction-based records.

[46] JIU/REP/2012/8, "Review of enterprise resource planning systems in United Nations system organizations".

153. Few ERP systems include any component of records management that is able to identify valuable records among all the information and evidence captured or link records to a retention schedule. As a matter of fact, the business industry standards for ERP system implementation do not refer to the establishment of functionality for records management. The scenario foreseen was the indefinite maintenance of (unnecessary) records in databases and applications. During this review, the Inspector came across two different types of analysis or position concerning this issue. Some interviewees argued strongly that documents generated by ERP systems (ultimately potential records), but also in any information systems, such as human resources management systems, must have an entry point into the record management system (in FAO, for example). It was expected that such integration would ideally eliminate or reduce redundancy and duplication (manual data entry in multiple systems or reprint of ERP system records), therefore saving time and financial resources and increasing efficiency. Conversely, other agencies ruled out the integration option, considering that it would be too costly to design and implement in ERP systems. This position relies heavily on the question of return on investment and value of a records management system created in an ERP system that would require heavy scalability expenditure and maintenance and would provide no added value, as the system would not differentiate among the varying types and values of records and documentation. At the United Nations Secretariat, long discussions on whether the Umoja initiative, an ERP solution that includes software designed to facilitate and streamline information between all business functions within the United Nations Secretariat, should integrate in its scope a records and archives management system, did not reach agreement on establishing such a module.

D. Digitization

154. Digitization does not refer only to scanning; it requires proper planning since digitizing documents is an expensive and time-consuming operation. Therefore, the purpose and benefits of a digitization project have to be carefully assessed before embarking on such project. Almost all departments and offices consulted during this review had digitization programmes, although at different magnitudes. Staff interviewed often underlined: (a) the advantages in terms of reducing the volume of papers handled by staff, and consequently the physical space required for storage; (b) the increased opportunities for dissemination and access resulting from the existence of digital files rather than printed items; and (c) the consequent improved efficiency of staff in the workplace. From an archivist's point of view, digitization is also an option to preserve damaged or fragile records that are at risk.[47]

155. The responses to the JIU questionnaire demonstrate the absence of corporate strategies for the digitization initiatives conducted in the United Nations entities. Digitization programmes take place in the respective departments, offices and units in a more or less autonomous way, according to their own priorities and the resources available. As a consequence, despite the existence of guidelines on digitization for the United Nations Secretariat produced by ARMS,[48] there is no

[47] The report "Understanding the costs of digitization" prepared for the Joint Information Systems Committee is illustrative of the efforts involved in such projects. Available at: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/digitisation/reports/breakingcosts.

[48] ARMS Standard on record-keeping requirements for digitization, 2009, is available from the ARMS website https://archives.un.org/sites/archives.un.org/files/Standard_RKreqfor%20digitisation3.pdf.

uniformity in terms of the equipment used, the technical processes applied (such as optical character recognition), the type of format produced or the metadata assigned, among other things. To address this, OICT is currently developing Unite Imaging. Similar guidelines were not mentioned by other entities in their responses to the JIU questionnaire.

156. In addition to born-digital documents, there is a massive amount of scanned documents to be managed: all should be subject of the same attention. Again, RAM programmes are key elements for conducting digitization projects: a first step should be a full review of the relevant files (inventorying, archiving or disposing of paper documents according to their retention period) in order to identify and scan the most relevant ones. One paradoxical finding is that, in the context of digitization projects, digitally born items are often re-scanned from a printed source.

E. Digital preservation[49]

157. The continuity of digital information has increasingly become a concern worldwide within the professional community both in the private and public sectors. It has led to the development of a series of standards with the objective of mitigating the impact of technology obsolescence on digital information assets.[50] Digital preservation refers hereafter to the measures undertaken by an entity to ensure the long-term preservation of records in digital formats (either scanned or born-digital) that have long-term or permanent value and to ensure continuous access to the knowledge they contain.

158. The early capture of digital records and their long-term preservation are closely related and interdependent as the attributes carried in the record's life cycle shall be determined as early as possible, and preferably at the creation time, even if the preservation phase only concerns a limited amount of records. For example, in the best-case scenario of receiving digital records from the various organizational units, ARMS is often confronted with hardware incompatibility, software obsolescence or the absence of technical description and metadata, which make it impossible to process the records as, expected.

159. Within the United Nations entities, as described above, the existing limited and inadequate measures concerning digital and electronic records are mostly intended to manage current and inactive records at best. **The present approach has not yet integrated the idea that some of these records have a long-term operational life cycle (sometimes up to 50 years) or will become historic archives owing to their permanent value. In other words, while the importance of managing electronic records is now gradually emerging, the notion of "electronic archives" has to be pushed forward**.

160. **This strategic issue should retain the highest attention at senior management level of the United Nations entities as the measures implemented**

[49] Most of the technical considerations reflected here were presented by two international consultants, Charles Dollar and Lori Ashley, authors of the Digital Preservation Capability Maturity Model. The considerations were highly appreciated at the meeting of the Section of International Organizations held in Brussels from 12 to 14 June 2013.

[50] For example, ISO 18492 (2005), "Document management applications — long-term preservation of electronic document-based information", and ISO 16363 (2012), "Space data and information transfer systems — Audit and certification of trustworthy digital repositories".

and decisions taken today are the guarantee that the electronic archives of tomorrow will be preserved in an adequate manner. The review shows, however, that at this time not enough attention is being paid to digital preservation strategies. Not only do RAM policy texts rarely include specific provisions ensuring the long-term preservation other than merely stating that the same rules should be respected for both printed and digital records but, as stated by ARMS, "**at present, there is no trustworthy preservation practice in place for United Nations digital archives". Hence, the Inspector recommends the launching of an inter-organization initiative to tackle this key aspect. Such an initiative should mobilize strong archivist and records management expertise as well as senior managerial capacity**.

161. Although it has yet to implement the archives module of Livelink/e-SAFE, which would capture records for more permanent storage, UNHCR is a notable positive exception that has taken initial steps towards a digital preservation strategy and has recently recruited a digital archivist. This position is seen as crucial to assess, develop and test a solution for the long-term preservation of UNHCR digital assets. These efforts have been undertaken in the framework of a 2013-2014 project that should result in the implementation and maintenance of a corporate solution for the long-term preservation of relevant items.

162. The Inspector understands that situations may vary according to each entity and its operational requirements regarding digital records. As underlined by the HLCM Strategic Plan,[51] "one size does not fit all", thus a flexible approach to conducting joint work among several agencies with specific requirements and resources is acceptable. **This report should serve as a trigger to raise this issue at the highest levels of each entity in order to ensure that digital preservation is governed, as stated, by the same RAM principles**.

163. To support the United Nations entities wishing to embark on a project addressing the digital preservation challenge, there are some models that have been developed by members of the professional community to assess the maturity of digital preservation within private or public institutions. These models provide guidance for the transition from disorganized and undisciplined management of digital records into increasingly mature digital preservation programmes. They envisage the main dimensions of the digital preservation challenge, including notably:

- Organizational capabilities and resources required to ensure a corporate digital preservation programme: a specific regulatory framework, governance principles applicable to the tools deployed, a collaboration culture among all stakeholders, a sufficient level of technical expertise and appropriate technology to deal with records across the entire life cycle, among other things. As exposed in this report, these elements are only nascent in the United Nations entities.

- A digital repository to provide technical assurance to ensure proper storage, security and access, among other things, to all records and for a long time. The Open Archival Information System (OAIS) model (ISO 14721) provides the framework and concepts for a digital archive while the Trustworthy Repositories Audit and Certification (TRAC, ISO 16363) identifies the

[51] CEB/2013/HLCM/2, Strategic Plan 2013-2016, paras. 12 and 13.

requirements that a trustworthy repository should provide to support long-term access and be used by United Nations entities as a basis to determine the options for creating a corporate or common archives repository.

- The ability to carry key services needed for continuous monitoring of the external and internal environments and to plan actions to sustain the integrity, security, usability and accessibility of electronic records stored in trusted digital repositories. This encompasses a wide range of actions requiring time, resources and expertise, including conducting electronic records survey to identify long-term records, having in place collaborative working relationships among stakeholders, ingesting the necessary records by systematically centralizing electronic records from the producers and transforming them into agreed neutral formats, processing descriptive metadata, taking action for storage, maintaining and renewing devices and media, safeguarding technical metadata, ensuring the security of the systems.

The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance coordination and cooperation among United Nations entities.

Recommendation 5

The Secretary-General, in his capacity as a Chair of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, should create an inter-organizational task force chaired by an experienced RAM expert, bringing together those entities most interested in developing a common approach to the preservation of long-term and/or permanent digital records (strategy, policy and infrastructure).

VI. Time for strategic choices

A. Benefits of enhanced RAM practices

164. Improved records management should be seen as an integral part of modernized administrative and business processes. There is consensus among records management officers that adequate RAM practices can generate significant benefits within any organization, whether private or public. The following quote found in the professional literature clearly makes the case: "Records management saves money. Good records management fosters efficient information access, relegates inactive records to inactive storage areas or facilities, and ensures the disposition of obsolete records, thereby reducing storage costs. Records management is something managers can justify to elected officials and taxpayers, it streamlines operations and saves tax dollars."[52] The reader will find a good list of the benefits to be expected from RM in ISO 15489, section 4.

165. These benefits are either quantitative or intangible. It is certain that the entities incur additional expenses, including in searching for information that is not readily available, storing either unnecessary or duplicated items both in printed and electronic formats and shipping unnecessary records from the field to headquarters.

[52] Bruce Dearstyne, "Why records management matters", *Public Management*, vol. 89, No. 10 (November 2007).

However, when it comes to making a financial estimate of possible medium-term and long-term benefits compared with current and future costs and consequent related net savings, one is confronted with a lack of baseline data and agreed assumptions that would help to clearly identify and, a fortiori, to measure both current waste (caused by existing practices) and future savings in the event that RAM practices were enhanced and aligned with the expectations of policy implementation. For example, information on the size of current collections of records maintained by organizational units, duplicated items kept in paper files or shared drives, the amount of relevant material not captured, the actual time spent researching items, is not readily available.

166. In the course of conducting this review, the Inspector came across very few concrete business cases elaborating on expected benefits following the introduction of enhanced RAM practices. There are various considerations to keep in mind while assessing the potential benefits of enhanced RAM, such as the personnel needed and the costs of physical storage and maintenance, licensing and training for IT applications, electronic storage, migrating and emulating digital items. The cost, sometimes very high, associated with searching and accessing information, the consequence of the loss of information and the duplication of basic work for similar projects or activities should also be factored into such estimates.

167. Exchanges of views with records management officers and other staff provided food for thought concerning a number of areas for potential savings. At the same time, it should be recognized that savings can be achieved only with economies of scale, namely in the form of a corporate undertaking requiring a minimum investment in terms of policy development, human resources assigned and technologies deployed, among other things. The return on investment would probably be achieved in the medium term.

Productivity gains for staff

168. In the private sector, studies have shown that productivity rises significantly after the definition of internal strict compliance rules for record keeping and the implementation of an RM system. In the United Nations, one can easily imagine the potential results in terms of work life and productivity for staff members of an easy, almost-immediate retrieval of files relevant to any issue. In the same vein, the audit on the modernization of record-keeping conducted by the French authorities highlighted that the average time necessary to search and access old items decreases when filing and sorting are properly done upstream, resulting in real archives and significant time spared in terms of paid work hours.[53]

169. There is no reason why it should be different in the United Nations context. All the available indicative figures confirm that the implementation of a RM system is a source of significant improvement in terms of efficiency at work and related productivity gains. One of the driving motivations of the managers who initiated RM programmes in their own departments was to increase the productivity of their substantive teams. These benefits are, of course, largely intangible and difficult to measure. In general, respondents to the questionnaires concurred with the idea that enhanced records and archives management would lead to better institutional

[53] Audit on the modernization of record-keeping conducted by the French authorities in 2007 (see table 3).

knowledge in succession planning and save time and money through avoiding repetition of similar and duplicating attempts or mistakes in the business processes.

170. Considering the situation in the United Nations and associated entities, the examples below show the potential for saving staff time, which can be re-directed to other functions, either administrative or substantive. Expressed in terms of numbers of international civil servants affected and their salaries, the savings may be significant.

- Several United Nations departments conducting RM projects (like DPI or DM) have tried to roughly estimate the time needed to retrieve and access their records and the expected time saved in researching and accessing relevant information. Their methodology varied but estimations range between 5 to 30 minutes saved on average **for each individual instance of research**. The frequency and type of research will obviously depend on the types of activities conducted by the department or office. The DPKO/DFS assumption in its digitization initiative project document (2012) was that searching time would be reduced by 80 per cent for each request made to its staff.
- EC also conducted research to estimate the time spent on average by its staff members for researching information in the work place. It added up to a matter of weeks per year, which should be seen as a source of possible corresponding savings for international organizations that are less advanced in terms of RAM policies and practices.

Financial savings in personnel costs

171. The Inspector found the most impressive example of financial savings at FAO. The Records Management Modernization Project focused initially on the many registries in place at FAO and looked into replacing them with a modern RM system, in which progressively each FAO staff member is directly involved in capturing and processing relevant items. The project resulted in the redefinition and redeployment of registry staff posts. FAO reduced the net number of staff involved in these functions from 42 to 28 full-time posts (previously mainly active in various registries, manually (re-) assigning messages and records into systems) and, at the same time, redefined the profile of positions to focus on a different set of competencies to replace "registry clerks" with "records managers" therefore offering increased professional interest, better career paths and a higher profile. This option generated significant savings. In 2010-2011, the savings amounted to $1.1 million. In 2012-2013, the further development of the project secured overall recurring biennial savings in personnel of $2.46 million.

172. UNHCR provided examples of savings resulting from the introduction of Livelink/e-SAFE. In the case of its Joint Review Board, the estimated savings amounted to more than $10,000 for each monthly meeting. The savings resulted from the reduction of travel fees and daily subsistence allowances, the time saved by staff members at the Reproduction Unit, the reduction of documentation (files, paper and toners), the costs corresponding to 36 hours of work of support staff to prepare the files and the documentation, among other things.

Improved quality of substantive work

173. In the same manner that the investments made in ERP systems are expected to streamline administrative processes, any investment made in RM is expected to improve the quality of substantive work. In 2013, a report issued on UNHCR field offices' record-keeping and archives provided some concrete examples of the impact of RM on substantive matters. In one country office, the loose practice of recording information on individual devices rather than in corporate repositories led to a loss of institutional memory that impacted the conduct of renegotiation of agreements with the national government.

174. The FAO project was based on the same assumption that investment in RM would improve the quality of substantive work. At the time of the JIU team mission to FAO, the second phase of the Records Management Modernization Project was looking into content management challenges and strategies for the retrieval of substantive information on FAO projects and general areas of work by the addition of tagging, the generation of daily or weekly thematic information digests automatically informing managers about the main points exchanged on any given topic under their responsibility or subscribed to by them.

175. The OHCHR Records Management Officer described in very precise terms the expected substantive benefits for the various thematic divisions of the Office. A corporate RM approach and a central repository of records (physical and digital) would, in her view, be a way to maximize the information capital of the Office. Her assessment was that "the work of respective OHCHR divisions would be better connected and human rights issues better interrelated therefore making the Office more relevant to its stakeholders." In the example above, UNHCR also noted that Livelink/e-SAFE had improved the quality of the meetings, as the Joint Review Board members were better prepared because they were getting the documentation on time and the space for errors due to manipulations was drastically reduced.

Office space saving

176. Sorting and identifying paper records that are no longer needed, based on agreed retention schedules, means less folders and boxes to manage and, as a consequence, less space required for storage, either in office premises or in electronic repositories. For physical items, this is a source of savings that will vary according to the costs of physical storage space at each duty station, with significant differences. For example DPKO and DFS estimated the cost of storage of printed items in the New York Secretariat building at $60 yearly per "linear foot".

177. The United Nations Secretariat CMP provided an opportunity for ARMS to approach several departments that were moving out of their premises or were expected to occupy a reduced area in their current premises. The proactive interactions between ARMS and these department or offices enhanced their records management awareness and, as a consequence, their practices. Such interactions often translated into a space rationalization exercise and further reduced the volume of documentation to be returned to the premises, which in turn generated savings. ARMS estimated that records disposal in offices amounted to approximately 30,000 linear feet saved, corresponding to an estimated total of $1.8 million per year on the basis of DKPO/DFS calculation. Other similar experiences at UN-Habitat and ECA showed that the attention given to business processes and related records provided grounds to better identify active records versus inactive records, resulting in similar rationalization.

IT-related savings

178. A common attitude among IT experts is that storage space for digital records is becoming cheaper and cheaper and is therefore not worth the effort of identifying those that are of short-term interest versus those of long-term or permanent value and managing them accordingly. The Inspector observes that this reasoning might not be fully satisfactory: current practices have cost implications for the organization as a whole and for each organizational unit individually, as shown below. More dynamic and informed management of digital records could certainly reduce these costs.

- Typically, at United Nations Headquarters and at many other locations, the usual costing model is that IT departments charge each department or office or unit for space used on servers and shared drives and for related services such as daily back-ups and data recovery (usually measured per GB/year). Thus, the accumulation of unnecessary records and duplicates mechanically increases the bill for each organizational unit. At UNOG, for example, a department using 1,000 GB of space (estimate for roughly 100 staff members) would have to pay $24,000 per year. If only 25 per cent of the digital items stored are unnecessary duplicates, which are probably a low estimate, there is a potential saving of $6,000 per staff and per year.

Table 8
Indicative figures for IT expenses for storage and back-up services

	Servers	*E-mail systems*
United Nations Headquarters	$19.50/GB as of 2014	$19.50/GB as of 2014
UNOG	$24 GB/Year	61SwF/0.5 GB (500 MB)

- The use of EDRMS for sorting and identifying records that are no longer needed as per a retention schedule would also save space on bandwidth as documents would no longer need to be attached to e-mail messages and a link to a single version in the filing plan and repository could be provided.

- In the absence of any dynamic management of digital records, migration or conversion procedures for digital records from one technical system or medium to another one, as foreseeable in the coming decades, concern a huge number of digital records and files. If such procedures only needed to be performed on targeted "permanent records", the time and resources needed for these technical operations would be greatly reduced.

- At present, in most cases, the actual content of a digital repository and its ultimate value for the entities is not fully owned by anybody: the records producers and records users have lost track of the information recorded and backed up, while the IT counterpart deals only with technical features and services. This leads to maintaining alive or usable, at ever increasing costs, phased-down applications using obsolete technology to secure future access to records of potential interest, if needed. It should be recalled that the useful life expectancy of any application seems nowadays to be limited from five to a maximum of 10 years.

179. It is expected that advanced RM would permit the identification of digital records of permanent value so that they could be saved, together with content and technical information (metadata), to ensure long-term access rather than spending money on obsolete systems. This approach seems much more convenient and logical. Is it reasonable to keep every record indefinitely, rather than sorting through them and disposing of the majority?

Improved reputation

180. Organizations demonstrating strong RM programmes are likely to be perceived by their member States and other stakeholders as more transparent, innovative and technologically up-to-date. This will have positive consequences for stakeholders' confidence in the organization or entity and its programmatic activities and therefore for the mobilization of assessed and voluntary funds. It would also be significant in terms of the accountability framework of the secretariats concerned.

181. From a legal point of view, there are also strong arguments in favour of paying closer attention to how the United Nations entities are capturing, managing and preserving their resources to ensure their integrity is maintained, in particular in the digital world. The capacity to demonstrate the authenticity of a digital record depends on the integrity of the records system in place, and this report reveals the current weaknesses of such arrangements. Considering current trends, the United Nations entities may face difficulties when requested to present certified records (hard copies or via digital signature certification), for instance in legal cases or in response to any formal demand for records and information in processes such as rebuttal of decisions or procurement awarding. This is to say nothing of the risk to its reputation if a field-oriented organization or entity is found to be unable to record the conflicts, crises and tragedies of all kinds with regard to which it is not just a mere witness but a major actor preparing and taking historical political and operational decisions.

B. Dismal current situation

182. This review shows that current RAM arrangements are characterized by fragmented approaches and inconsistent implementation of often-unknown policy principles. Currently, different organizational units, instead of being approached globally, handle paper-based and digital processes quite separately. While it is well understood that the types of challenges vary according to different media and formats given that the tools necessary to capture, manage and store them are quite diverse, it remains that, for corporate consistency, all records should be subject to the same processing principles. The way RAM issues are currently addressed in the United Nations entities is a striking example of a "silo syndrome" and a lack of a corporate multidisciplinary and collaborative approach in the organizational culture that would imply more mutual respect than pyramidal competing authorities. The RAM perspective is based on the organization of information and compliance rules, the IT perspective focuses on technical and operational effectiveness and the knowledge-management and knowledge-sharing approach favours the capture, dissemination and updating of key concepts and lessons learned. The three elements have not yet been fully reconciled. As a consequence, RAM professionals, IT specialists and knowledge-management officers rarely work hand-in-hand to build

corporate projects using, in synergy and with an equal authority, their respective professional strengths.

183. In the Inspector's opinion, the major reason for a general lack of correct RAM practices (see chap. IV, table 1) is the fact that, with one or two exceptions, there is no clearly recognized leadership in the United Nations with sufficient authority to give a consistent corporate direction to such multidisciplinary projects as those called for by the present RAM situation. Often the RAM unit deals with the physical records and the IT department assumes responsibility for digital records, in particular for content and document management processes, with little attention paid to RM principles in back-up strategies. Items in other formats, such as audio-visual, are often overlooked.

C. A necessary corporate initiative

184. In this regard, through long years of sustained effort and a real cultural revolution, EC has progressively attained results, which satisfy not only the RAM principles but also all the stakeholders concerned and the average staff member. As in that case, organizational units and records producers according to a common set of classification and retention principles should apply the notions and principles described in this report equally. This requires a high-level, courageous, political and strategic initiative, a strategy based on robust information and consultation as well as a significant first allocation of resources. Having an effective RAM programme functioning across the United Nations, both at headquarters and in field offices, can only originate from a corporate commitment at the highest level of each United Nations entity and, even better, of the whole "United Nations Group", under the leadership of the Secretary-General. **The present report demonstrates that the status quo is no longer an option**.

185. In the Inspector's opinion, any widespread effort to further enhance current capacity or existing positive but piecemeal initiatives would not be sufficient to make significant progress and ensure the expected level of RAM efficiency in the United Nations entities. Therefore, given that all Member States, managers, staff members and every beneficiary of past and present services of the United Nations are legitimately concerned stakeholders, it is time for the senior management of the United Nations entities to prepare and initiate action-oriented discussions concerning the strategic choices to be made in this area and duly inform their Member States at such time as their approval is required to determine a clear course of action.

186. The situation in each United Nations entity covered by this report is likely to differ according to its respective business model and operational requirements, the state of its archives and, in particular, the existence or absence of experts and IT systems specialized in RM, the human and financial resources needed and the time to mobilize them. The same momentum would have to be created and sustained across each entity as growing net financial returns and other benefits may occur only in the medium-term perspective. One conclusion is applicable across the board: the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report will require the launch of relevant projects at the corporate level.

187. Such a project would be designed to encompass every part of an entity in order to ensure that the undertaking had the political strength and authority to make the main actors (particularly all the managers) accept the common rules, progressively

building on the main features of tools to ensure the respect of ISO 15489 (and possibly other standards), in particular, a common filing plan and retention periods based on the use of RCUN.

188. In spite of the foreseeable resistance of many to sharing their information (seen as power) and management changes, if conceived at the corporate level of a whole entity such a project would provide the momentum necessary and represent a huge economy of scale. Based on a serious gap analysis, it will include:

- Establishment of a governing body representing all departments or offices as creators and users of records, including in the field.
- Design and launch of a medium-term phased and planned strategy.
- Preparation and promulgation of RAM principles followed by mandatory texts on RAM policy.
- Appointment of a project team with a leader reporting to senior management.
- Recruitment or training of a network of specialized documents and records management officers and coordinators, possibly from one special competitive examination for their professional group.
- Regular information updates to the governing body, in line with its initial expectations.
- Design and implementation of monitoring and oversight provisions.
- Production of adapted training and awareness rising, including online.
- Competitive selection of experienced consultants.
- Choice after serious medium-term and long-term cost-benefit analysis and on a competitive basis of communications systems, servers and software ensuring compliance with all necessary ISO-related RAM functionalities, including the field.

189. The present situation clearly requires a project at corporate level, the Inspector does not want to pre-empt the conclusion of discussions, which logically should develop among the Secretary-General, and the executive heads of the entities covered by this report. Two options regarding implementation are conceivable: (a) to build a one United Nations common project at the "United Nations Group" level based on common principles covering the whole life cycle of all types of recorded information, or (b) to launch multiple projects, one for each United Nations entity, coordinated through a United Nations RAM task force that would translate the common principles into specific rules and procedures adapted to the needs, situation, and specific culture of each entity. The first option would reinforce the project's momentum and the economies of scale to be derived from it, but would make its governance and funding more complex. In both cases, the principles of RAM, the ISO compatibility and the field orientation of the project(s) should be considered. In the second option, a common working group could be tasked with such objectives. The most effective solution might be to combine both options.

The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance the effectiveness of RAM in the United Nations entities.

Recommendation 6

The General Assembly and the governing bodies of the United Nations entities covered by this report should request the Secretary-General and the respective executive heads to present a corporate or joint project proposal to enhance RAM in a consistent way within their respective entities.

190. RAM also provides **an avenue towards adopting a system-wide approach** as in the (much more complex and costly) case of organizations preparing to comply with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).[54] It would be a positive development to see these issues tackled at the level of CEB through a dedicated task force or network bringing together either several or all agencies represented in HLCM, if interested in establishing ISO-compatible common principles, and allowing them to exchange information on their experiences, challenges and progress made. This would provide an opportunity to embark on the harmonization of business practices as promoted by HLCM in its Strategic Plan 2013-2016, paragraph 13, in which it "agrees to the principle of conducting joint work, where appropriate, with an opt-in/out-out approach. Utilizing this approach, initially a smaller group interested in advancing a particular topic would conduct groundwork and pilot implementation, with other member organizations joining in at later stages, depending on the evolving scope and potential impact of the subject." If such an initiative is taken, it could encompass addressing the issue of digital preservation as specified in this report (paragraphs 157-163 and recommendation 5).

[54] JIU/REP/2010/6, "Preparedness of the United Nations system organizations for the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)".

Annex I

Definition of key RAM terms (also available from JIU website with extended set of terms and comparison of definitions adopted by selected international organizations)

Access	Right, opportunity, means of finding, using or retrieving information (ISO 15489-1)
Appraisal	The process of establishing the value of a record in order to establish retention periods (ARMS)
Archives	Records to be permanently preserved for their administrative, fiscal, legal, historical or informational value (ST/SGB/2007/5)
Classification	The process of identifying the category or categories of business activities and the records they generate and grouping them, if applicable, into files to facilitate description, control, links and determination of disposition and access status (ISO/TR15489-2)
Destruction	Process of eliminating or deleting records, beyond any possible reconstruction (ISO 15489-1)
Digitization	The conversion of analog material into a digital format through digital photography or scanning. For example scanning a paper document to create a digital copy (ARMS)
Disposal/Disposition	The transfer of records, especially non-current records, to their final state, either destruction or transfer to archives (ARMS)
Document	Recorded information or objects, regardless of format or medium, which can be treated as a unit (ISO 15489-1)
Enterprise content management (ECM)	Technologies, tools, and methods used to capture, manage, store, preserve and deliver content across an enterprise. ECM platforms provide the integrated tools, methods and strategies for establishing information (documents, records and archives) management systems (ARMS)
Digital/Electronic records	Records that are communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment and that have: (a) structure: the format of the electronic record and any links to attachments or other related documents; (b) content: the information in the structure of the electronic record conveying the evidence of the transaction; and (c) context: the information documenting the source in terms of the transaction to which it relates, creator, date, security and access, language, disposal, format, etc., of the electronic record and which is normally separated in the structure from the content (ARMS)
File plan	A plan or scheme developed by an office, department or organization to organize and arrange different types of files (ARMS)
Metadata	Data describing context, content and structure of records and their management through time (ISO 15489; ISO 30300)

Preservation	Processes and operations involved in ensuring the technical and intellectual survival of authentic records through time (ISO 15489-1)
Record(s)	Any data or information, regardless of form or medium, maintained by the United Nations as evidence of a transaction (ST/SGB/2007/5)
Record-keeping	Making, maintaining and disposing of complete, accurate and reliable evidence of transactions in the form of records (ST/SGB/2007/5)
Records management	Field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records (ISO 15489)
Records producers/users	Those individuals or organizational units producing and/or receiving documents in the course of their official activities that become organizational records
Retention schedule/period	A comprehensive instruction developed by a department or an office covering the disposition of records to ensure that they are retained for as long as necessary based on their administrative, fiscal, legal, historical or informational value (ST/SGB/2007/5)
Transfer	The process of moving records (to historical archives repository) as part of their life cycle (ARMS)

Annex II

Main policy and guidance documents regarding records and archives management in selected United Nations entities

Secretary-General's bulletins covering all United Nations Secretariat organizational units hereafter marked below by an asterisk (*) as per ST/SGB/2002/11		
ST/SGB/2004/15	Use of information and communication technology resources and data, approved by the Secretary-General	Defines the proper use of information technology and related resources and data, and aims to ensure the security and technical integrity of the system.
ST/SGB/2007/5	Record-keeping and the management of United Nations archives, approved by the Secretary-General	Sets out (a) the rules and procedures to be followed in respect of the creation, management and disposition of records, electronic records, archives and non-current records of the United Nations and (b) sets out the procedures regarding access to United Nations archives and non-current records.
ST/SGB/2007/6	Information sensitivity, classification and handling, approved by the Secretary-General	Defines rules for ensuring the classification and secure handling of confidential information entrusted to or originating from the United Nations; describes classification principles and levels; sets out declassification process and rules for handling of classified information.
ST/SGB/2013/1	Organization of the Office of Central Support Services, approved by the Secretary-General	Confirms that the Office of Central Support Services is responsible for advising on records management and maintaining custody of archives at headquarters, OAH, regional commissions and United Nations field missions, operations and other offices of the Secretariat.
United Nations regional commissions: additional reference documents		
ECA*	UNECA Archives and Records Management Policy (2012), approved by the Director of the Division for Administration	Establishes principles, responsibilities and requirements for managing the records of ECA to ensure that they are properly created, managed, maintained and disposed of to protect the Commission's legal and financial rights and preserve its institutional memory.
ESCWA*	Draft UNESCWA standard operating procedures for records management and archiving (2012), approved by the Director of the Administrative Services Division	Seeks to establish on-going and sustainable cooperation among all sections in the Administrative Services Division (ASD) by defining guidelines and procedures for uniform standards for the creation, classification, retention and transferring of records of continuing values to the central archives.
United Nations offices away from Headquarters: additional reference documents		
UNOG*	IC/Geneva/2001/55: Archives and records management of the United Nations Office at Geneva	Outlines the role of the UNOG Registry, Records and Archives Unit (now Institutional Memory Section) in records management and archives and restates rules to be followed by Secretariat units and members of the Secretariat with respect to their responsibilities in the maintenance, transfer and disposition of the archives and non-current records of the United Nations Office at Geneva. It also explains the guidelines concerning internal and public access to the United Nations archives.

Other departments and offices		
DPKO/DFS*	6400/ADM/POL/0504 Amendment 2: DPKO/DFS Policy Directive on Records Management (2006, amended 2008) as approved by USG DPKO	Establishes the framework and responsibilities for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Field Support (DFS) records management programme that applies to all DPKO and DFS staff at headquarters and in peacekeeping missions; stresses mandatory compliance.
	Use of the Peacekeeping File Classification Scheme (2008) as approved by the Chief of Staff, DPKO	Provides detailed instructions on the use of the peacekeeping file classification scheme designed for both paper and electronic records.
	Use of the retention schedule for Records Common to UN Peacekeeping and Political Operations (RCUN.P) (2011) as approved by the USG DPKO and the USG DFS	Allows the management of administrative records that are commonly found in all offices in field missions and that do not document their core business activities (e.g., finance records in a personnel office).
	Use of the Peacekeeping Headquarters Retention Schedule (PHRS) v.2 (2011) as approved by the USG DPKO and USG DFS	
	Standard operating procedure: access and declassification of archives and non-current records (2006, amended 2010) as approved by USG DPKO	Establishes access and declassification procedure for archives and non-current records of the peacekeeping group.
	Standard operating procedure: access to information (2011) as approved by USG DPKO	Allows for the management of access rights and restrictions to information produced by all offices within peacekeeping, specifically a common framework for access to information (based on access rights matrix) facilitates consistency in sharing or restriction of core office information.
OCHA*	Policy instruction on records management (2011), approved by Emergency Relief Coordinator and USG for Humanitarian Affairs	This policy establishes the framework and responsibilities for the OCHA records management programme and are consistent with the Secretariat-wide records management standards and requirements as outlined by ST/SGB/2007/5.
OHCHR*	OHCHR is at the preliminary stage of publishing additional internal policies on retention, record-keeping and access that will follow the principles of United Nations policies in a narrower OHCHR context	
	OHCHR Field administrative manual	
UNHCR*	IOM/72/1999: Introducing records schedules	Sets the principles for identifying types of UNHCR records and determining retention period; disposing of them promptly and appropriately once authorized retention periods have expired; and transferring permanent records to the UNHCR archives for preservation and future research use.

	IOM/031/2005: UNHCR Electronic records policy	Provides direction for the management of electronic records communicated by e-mail and other UNHCR digital records; stresses that Livelink/e-SAFE is a key element of the UNHCR record-keeping system for records in any media.
	IOM/039/2009: Strengthening compliance with electronic record-keeping and the use of Livelink/e-SAFE as the UNHCR global electronic document management system	Provides the guidelines and requirements to achieve compliance for maintaining best practices in UNHCR electronic document management and record-keeping and calls for action by managers and staff alike to actively engage in adhering to the principles of preserving electronic records.
	IOM/076/2010: UNHCR information classification, handling and disclosure policy	
	An introduction to UNHCR document management system (latest version 2011)	Provides the fundamental information and working instructions to use the Livelink/ e-SAFE system in compliance with policy principles.
United Nations funds and programmes		
UNDP	Updated Information Management Strategy (2008-2013)	Sets out the main principles for document management, record retention and archival policy.
	Programme and Operations Policy and Procedures Manual (POPP).One section deals with records management and one section with electronic document management	Sets out corporate standards for filing, retention and archiving of records for country offices and headquarters units; describes principles for the management of documents in electronic format and includes specific provisions when such documents are legal instruments or are required for audit purposes.
	Information and classification handling policy (2013)	
UNEP*	No information available	
UNFPA	UNFPA Filing system/records management guidelines (1997), approved by the Chief of the Procurement and Administrative Branch and UNFPA updated Document retention guidance (2012)	
UN-Habitat*	UN-Habitat Archives and Records Management Policy (2007), approved by the Executive Director (under review in 2013 to include electronic records and digital preservation issues)	Ensures that full and accurate records of all UN-Habitat activities, decisions and transactions, are created and managed to preserve the organization's institutional memory.
UNICEF	CF/EXD/1983/2867: UNICEF Archives and Records (1983), Memorandum of the Executive Director	States certain general rules with regard to the preservation of the records of UNICEF in accordance with United Nations practice, and prescribes custodial responsibility.

	CF/AI/1983/359: Procedural guidelines for UNICEF records and archives (1983)	Details the rules and procedures to be followed in respect of transfer, maintenance, custody and disposition of the archives and non-current records of UNICEF and also explains the guidelines concerning internal and public access to UNICEF records stored at the archives or records centres.
	CF/IC/2001-029: UNICEF IT policy on use of IT systems	
	CF/EXD/2010/003: UNICEF Information disclosure policy (2012)	
UNOPS	Organizational Directive No. 12 (Revision 1, 2011) on UNOPS record retention policy, approved by the Executive Director	Recognizes the fact that UNOPS produces records as part of its daily business and that UNOPS must thus unambiguously classify as well as register, file, transfer, archive, maintain and dispose of records as an indispensable part thereof. Aims to ensure that UNOPS meets the requirements of ISO 9001 with regard to record retention; to ensure transparency and traceability of UNOPS business conduct; and at fostering efficiency and effectiveness as regards the conduct, traceability and documentation of UNOPS business operations.
UN-Women	General guidelines on records management (2012), prepared by the Division of Management and Administration	Defines policies and procedures related to the maintaining, filing, archiving and disposing of records.
WFP	Executive Director Circular 2005/006 on the establishment of policies and procedures for records management in WFP (2005)	
	Administrative Division Directive 2005/007 on implementation of records management policies and procedures in WFP	Establishes the organizational procedures that will enable the implementation of the records management policy by defining the organizational arrangements and the responsibilities and the overall role of the Records Management Unit.
	Administrative Division Directive 2006/006 on Records Retention Policy in WFP	Prescribes WFP policy on record retention to ensure that records needed for business purposes are adequately protected and maintained and that records which are no longer necessary or of no value are discarded at the appropriate time, and provides WFP staff with rules and procedures for the retention and disposal of official records.
	WFP Records management handbook (2006)	Indicates the strategy to be followed in managing the records of the organization, and illustrates the significance of records and the principles and procedures guiding their handling and maintenance.
Other related entities		
IRMCT (2012)	S/RES/1966 (2010)	Requests the Secretary-General to prepare, in consultation with the Security Council, an information security and access regime for the archives of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals prior to the first commencement date referred to in paragraph 1 of the resolution.

	S/RES/1966 (2010), article 27	States that the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals shall be responsible for the management, including preservation and access, of these archives and that the archives of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda shall be co-located with the respective branches of the Mechanism, and that, in managing access to these archives, the Mechanism shall ensure the continued protection of confidential information, including information concerning protected witnesses, and information provided on a confidential basis. For this purpose, the Mechanism shall implement an information security and access regime, including for the classification and declassification as appropriate of the archives.
	ST/SGB/2012/3 (in conjunction with the Secretary-General's bulletins listed above)	Ensures the classification, secure handling and provision of authorized access to the records and information entrusted to or originating from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, herein referred to as "the Criminal Tribunals", in recognition of their statutory power to grant, refuse or restrict access to their records and information.
UNRWA*	An agency-wide archive policy at drafting stage	
UNU	See ST/SGBs above	

Annex III

Main international standards on records and archives management

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)	
ISO 15489 (2001)	Records management (Part 1 & 2)
ISO 18492 (2005)	Document Management Applications, Long-term preservation of electronic document-based information
ISO 22310 (2006)	Guidelines for standards drafters for stating records management requirements in standards
ISO 23081 (2006; 2009 and 2011)	Records management processes, Metadata for records (Part 1-3)
ISO 26122 (2008)	Work process analysis for records
ISO/TR 13028 (2010)	Implementation guidelines for digitization of records
ISO 16175 (2010 and 2011)	Principles and functional requirements for records in electronic office environments (Part 1 to 3)
ISO 30300 and ISO 30301 (2011)	Information and documentation, Management systems for records
ISO 13008 (2012)	Digital records conversion and migration process
ISO 14721 (2012)	Space data and information transfer systems — Open Archival Information System (OAIS) — Reference model
ISO 16363 (2012)	Space data and information transfer systems — Audit and certification of trustworthy digital repositories
ISO 17068 (2012)	Trusted third party repository for digital records
ISO/IEC 17826 (2012)	2012 Information Technology/Cloud Data Management Interface (CDMI)
International Council on Archives (ICA)	
ISAD(G)	General International Standard Archival Description
ISDIAH	International Standard for Describing Institutions with Archival Holdings
ISDF	International Standard for Describing Functions
ISAAR(CPF)	International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families. Second edition
ICA	Principles of Access to Archives
ICA	Guidelines for developing a retention schedule for records management and archival professional associations, including a model retention schedule
ICA	Code of Ethics for Archivists

Other organizations	
DOD 5051.2	Electronic records (US National Archives)
MoReq2 (European Union)	Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records

Annex IV

Organizational arrangements for records and archives management in selected United Nations entities

	Specialized/dedicated unit responsible for records and archives management at corporate level	Other stakeholders
United Nations Secretariat Headquarters	United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (ARMS) placed in the Office of Central Support Services of the Department of Management. Headed by a Chief Archivist (P-5), ARMS has five Professional and 14 General Service posts. Extrabudgetary funding provides for two professionals supporting its work concerning peacekeeping missions	Content Management Section, Knowledge Management Service Unit in the Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT) has developed UNITEdocs for which currently three full-time equivalent posts are deployed).
United Nations regional commissions		
ECA*	Archives and Records Management Unit (ARMU) placed under the Knowledge and Library Services Section in the Public Information and Knowledge Management Division	
ECE*	No specialized/dedicated unit	UNECE referred to the/UNOG Library.
ECLAC*	No specialized/dedicated unit	RAM functions and responsibilities are exercised by several units such as the Executive Secretary's Office, the ICTS team, the Hernan Santa Cruz Library, the Procurement Section and others.
ESCAP*	No specialized/dedicated unit.	
ESCWA*	Mail Archives and Records Management Unit in the General Services Section. Two General Service posts	Information and Communications Systems Section (ICSS) for guidance and technical support Knowledge Management Committee for policy direction and e-archiving plan.
United Nations offices away from Headquarters		
UNOG*	Within the Institutional Memory Section of the UNOG Library headed by a Chief (P-5), the Records Management and Digitization Unit (RMDU, 1 P-3 + 9 General Service) and :he Archives Management Unit (AMU, 1 P-2 + 6 General Service)	
UNON*	N.A.	N.A.
UNOV/ UNODC	Archives and Records Unit (Registry) is the General Support Section	Information Technology Section in the Department of Management oversees the Electronic Registry system.

Other departments and offices		
DPKO/DFS	At headquarters, the DPKO/DFS Peacekeeping Information Management Unit promulgates policies; in the field, Information Management/Records Management Units are in place in five peacekeeping missions: MINUSTAH, MONUSCO, UNMIL, UNMISS and UNTSO	DPKO/DFS Information and Communications Technology Division (ICTD) develop ICT tools to support the implementation of organizational and DPKO/DFS information management policies.
OCHA*		The Chief of the Communications and Information Services Branch will monitor implementation of this policy and conduct audits to monitor records management compliance.
OHCHR*	No specialized/dedicated unit. Since 2011, a Records Management Officer (P-3, extrabudgetary funding) placed in the General Administrative Services Section. There is currently no funding available to implement a RM programme	
UNCTAD*	No specialized/dedicated unit	UNCTAD referred to the UNOG Library.
UNHCR*	Records and Archives Section (RAS) placed in the External Relations Branch Headed by a P-4 Senior Archivist, RAS relies on 5 Professional and 5 General Service posts	
United Nations funds and programmes		
UNDP	No specialized/dedicated unit	RAM functions and responsibilities are exercised by the Bureau of Management and the Bureau for Development Policy for the policy aspects; by the Administrative Services Division for document management operations at headquarters and by the Office of Information Systems and Technology for electronic systems related to document management.
UNEP*	No information available	
UNFPA	No specialized/dedicated unit	RAM functions and responsibilities are spread among various Divisions/Branches: the Facilities and Administrative Services Branch (FABS) for physical archive retention policy, the Management Information Services Branch (MIS) for technical issues and specifically e-mail policy/shared network drives and the strategic information and KM branch within the programme division for the knowledge management application DOCUSHARE.
UN-Habitat*	Knowledge Management Support Unit placed in the Office of Management Branch. The unit is headed by 1 Professional staff member and 5 General Service staff members	

UNICEF	No specialized/dedicated unit since the dismantling of RMU in 2011 due to resourcing constraints	RAM functions and responsibilities are exercised by several divisions, such as the divisions of human resources, supply, information technology and financial and administrative management.
UNOPS	No specialized/dedicated unit.	Records management is part of the Administrative Unit in the Corporate Support Services at UNOPS headquarters.
UN-Women	No specialized/dedicated unit.	RAM functions and responsibilities are partially ensured by the Administrative Office in the Division of Management and Administration.
WFP	No specialized/dedicated unit since the dismantling of RMU in 2007 which was placed in the Information and Communications Technology Division.	RAM functions and responsibilities are exercised by the Division of Administration in charge of the physical archives. The regional bureaux and the (sub) country offices are autonomous in terms of records management and archives preservation.
Other related entities		
IRMCT (2012)	Archives and Records Section (MARS) of the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals placed in the Registry Headed by a Chief Archivist (P-5), MARS has 12 Professional and 10 General Service posts.	
UNRWA*	No specialized/dedicated unit.	To some extent, RAM functions are exercised by the General Services Unit at headquarters (Amman), in collaboration with Central Records Unit at headquarters (Gaza).
UNU	Archives and Registry Unit in the UNU Library together with the Administration and the Office of the Rector GS-5 and GS-3 reporting to Librarian at Professional level	

Annex V

Main policy and guidance documents regarding e-mail and their attachments in selected United Nations entities

Secretary-General bulletins covering all United Nations Secretariat organizational units as per ST/SGB/2002/11		Management of e-mail and attachments as records	Usage policy
ST/SGB/2004/15	Use of information and communication technology resources and data Information circular on the management of e-mails **in preparation since 2006**		✓
ARMS Guidelines on managing e-mails as records: https://archives.un.org/content/managing-emails-records		✓	
United Nations regional commissions, additional reference documents			
ECA*	--		
ECE*	--		
ECLAC*	--		
ESCAP*	--		
ESCWA*	ESCWA Messaging System Retention and Archiving Policy		
United Nations offices away from headquarters: additional reference documents			
UNOG*	IC/Geneva/2006/15: Appropriate usage of e-mail and internet facilities		✓
UNON*	E-mail Management Policy for UNEP, UN-Habitat and UNON (2012)		✓
UNOV/UNODC	--		
Other departments and offices			
DPKO/DFS*	--		
OCHA*	--		
OHCHR*	Guidelines developed on the basis of the prepared United Nations Information Circular (2011/12)	✓	✓
UNCTAD*	--		
UNHCR*	IOM/039/2009: Strengthening compliance with electronic record-keeping and the use of Livelink/e-SAFE as the UNHCR Global electronic document management system IOM/031/2005: UNHCR Electronic Records Policy	✓	

United Nations funds and programmes			
UNDP	UNDP ICT Governance Group endorsed the Organizational Performance Group's decision to establish an e-mail retention policy		✓
UNEP*	E-mail Management Policy for UNEP, UN-Habitat and UNON (2012)	?	?
UNFPA	UNFPA Policies and Procedures Manual: E-mail Policy (2012)		✓
UN-Habitat*	E-mail Management Policy for UNEP, UN-Habitat and UNON (2012)	?	?
UNICEF	CF/IC/2001-029: Policy on use of UNICEF IT systems (2001)		✓
UNOPS	--	--	
UN-Women	--	--	
WFP	OD2010/001: Electronic messaging: Directive on the use of WFP Corporate E-mail and other Electronic Messaging Services AD 2005/006: WFP Corporate e-mails, Directive on E-mail Use, Policy and Procedure and WFP Records management handbook (2006) section 4.2.3.		✓
Other related entities			
IRMCT (2012)	--	--	
UNRWA*	--	--	
UNU	--	--	

Annex VI

Arrangements for physical archival collections in selected United Nations entities

		Figures collected in response to JIU questionnaire
United Nations Secretariat Headquarters	Centralized at Headquarters in the main complex and in an industrial building outside Manhattan. Many pockets of records and archives remain in departments and offices	Non-current records: 22,736 linear feet (45,472 boxes) Archives: 22,736 linear feet (65,261 boxes).
ECA*	RAM project at early stage	
ECE*	Centralized and housed physically in the UNOG Library	Handled by UNOG Library IMS.
ECLAC*	Vital collections with historical value are stored in the Library. Administrative collections are stored in hard copy in the different units' storage rooms	
ESCAP*		No information available.
ESCWA*	Decentralized as documents of archival nature remain in the custody of each division or section. Some archives material, mainly organizational, financial and personnel related documents, exist in stores under the custody of General Services Section	Archiving room MB12 (47 m^2)
United Nations offices away from Headquarters		
UNOG*	The non-current records and historical archives are centrally stored by the UNOG Library Institutional Memory Section for the most part. However, some entities still have storage rooms with non-current records and historical archives, which need to be processed and transferred to IMS. In theory, IMS maintains collections for Geneva-based UNECE, UNCTAD, OHCHR	Non-current records: 7 lkm. Archival collection: 6 lkm (including 3 km of League of Nations archives).
UNON*	No information available	
UNOV/UNODC*	Decentralized: Non-current records and historical archives are housed with the using units.	Unknown
Other departments and offices		
DPKO/DFS*	DPKO/DFS do not hold physical archives. Archives are centrally held by UNARMS.	
OCHA*		Handled by UNOG Library IMS.

OHCHR*	Centralized in Palais Wilson for non-current and archival records (and Palais des Nations, UNOG Library), decentralized in the Motta Office where the storages are dispatched in departments	A total estimate of 1.5 lkm in Geneva.
UNCTAD*		Handled by UNOG Library IMS.
UNHCR*	Centralized: non-current records and historical archives are centrally stored and maintained in the UNHCR Archives at headquarters. There is an unknown volume of archives in the field not yet transferred	10 lkm of physical records of which it is estimated that 40 per cent of the paper files in the archives have long-term value. 1,500 boxes of archives in external storage.
United Nations funds and programmes		
UNDP	Centralized for headquarters records that are maintained off-site by a third party company since 2009 Decentralized as each country office must establish an area for archiving and manage its own archives. When an office closes, permanent records should be transferred and maintained at headquarters	34,000 cubic feet for headquarters.
UNEP*	No information available	
UNFPA	All UNFPA archived material is held centrally stored and maintained off-site by two external third-party companies since the mid-1990 and 2011 respectively	5,316 cubic feet.
UN-Habitat*	Most of the non-current records are centrally stored and physically located in three main areas of the Gigiri compound	Non-current records currently undergoing appraisal process estimated at 4300 boxes (approximately 30,100 files). Appraised records which have been found to have an enduring value to the organization estimated at 1,200 boxes (approximately 8400 files).
UNICEF	At headquarters, records and archives are both centrally stored by a third party in a New Jersey warehouse and in units. There is no provision for transfer from field offices to headquarters	10,000 boxes of archive material at New Jersey warehouse and 300 boxes at UNICEF House in basement storage area.
UNOPS	Decentralized, each unit keeps its records. The very few records of permanent value are kept in the basement of Copenhagen headquarters	
UN-Women	Centralized for headquarters records stored by a third party	In principle UN-Women inherited the archives of its components originating from the United Nations Secretariat (Division for the Advancement of Women, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women) as well as United Nations Development Fund for Women.

WFP	Headquarters records are stored at the Rome headquarters and in Brindisi	About 380,000 current records. No information about the number of non-current records.
Other related entities		
IRMCT (2012)	IRMCT/MARS has taken over the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia centralized records repositories.	Approximately 600 linear metres of International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia non-current records and historical archives. Created in 2102, IRMCT has not yet generated non-current records or historical archives.
UNRWA*	Centralized for headquarters departments in the archives store in Amman (located previously in Vienna). Decentralized: each field office stores in-house	921 boxes containing roughly 10,000 jacket files.
UNU	Centralized, all items kept at Tokyo headquarters	Several hundred boxes.

Annex VII

Overview of RAM within selected United Nations entities

This annex provides background information in relation to paragraphs 53-54. It presents the set of criteria used for the assessment of the entities placed on two axes: the RAM regulatory framework (axis 1) and the RAM practices (axis 2) of respective entities. The application of the criteria to the respective entities appears in the complementary annex XII available on the JIU website (www.unjiu.org).

Axis 1: RAM regulatory framework (policies and institutional arrangements)

Criteria 1 (Framework)

No promulgated corporate policy for RAM	**0**
RAM policy promulgated but is incomplete or outdated	**1**
Policy promulgated for main RAM aspects (ISO), primarily for printed items	**3**
Policy promulgated for main RAM aspects (ISO), for both printed and digital items	**4**
Policy promulgated for main RAM aspects (ISO), for both printed and digital items, consolidated with practical guidelines into a corporate manual	**5**

Criteria 2 (Level of promulgation of the framework)

No promulgated RAM principles	**0**
RAM principles promulgated by dedicated RAM unit	**2**
RAM principles promulgated by one division	**3**
RAM principles promulgated for the entire entity, mainly for headquarters	**4**
RAM principles promulgated for the entire entity, good ownership also away from headquarters	**5**

Criteria 3 (Guidance material)

No practical guidance material available	**0**
Practical guidance material is partial and/or outdated	**1**
Practical guidance material is complete and up to date, but not systematically disseminated within the entity	**3**
Practical guidance material is complete and up to date, good ownership in the entity	**5**

Criteria 4 (Electronic messaging)

No promulgated e-mail policy	**0**
E-mail policy promulgated, but limited to internal **usage**	**2**
E-mail policy (usage) complemented by informal guidelines for managing e-mails as records	**3**
E-mail policy promulgated to **manage e-mails as records** when applicable	**5**

Criteria 5 (Institutional arrangements)

No dedicated structure for RAM in the entity	0
RAM responsibilities allocated to various stakeholders in the entity	1
RAM responsibilities allocated to a dedicated unit with limited authority and resources	3
RAM responsibilities allocated to a dedicated unit with a formal network of focal point/records coordinators	4
RAM dedicated unit in place, well-funded, with monitoring and control authority	5

Axis 2: RAM practices

Criteria 1 (Management of physical paper records/archives)

Physical paper records not maintained/kept by organizational units/records producers/users	0
Organizational units/records producers keep their records in office premises but not in the context of RAM programme (classification/retention principles, transfer, etc.,)	1
Some organizational units/records producers implement RAM programmes (classification/retention principles, transfer, etc.,)	2
Most organizational units/records producers implement RAM programmes (classification/retention principles, transfer, etc.,)	3
Consistent entity-wide RAM programme (classification/retention principles, transfer, non-permanent records destroyed after designated retention period)	5

Criteria 2 (Management of digital records/archives)

Digital records not maintained/kept by organizational units/records producers/users	0
Various information systems, including document management systems, used to store digital records	1
Initial plans for EDRMS or at pilot phase to manage digital records	2
EDRMS deployed at HQ to capture and manage digital records, implementing classification and retention principles	3
EDRMS deployed at HQ and field offices to capture and manage e-records, implementing classification and retention principle	5

Criteria 3 (Monitoring)

Policy promulgation as sole compliance measure	1
Internal control mechanisms put in place by organizational units/records producers/users themselves	2
RAM focal points deployed through the entity and having close contact with RAM dedicated unit	3
RAM dedicated unit effectively monitors compliance of records producers/users with RAM practices	4
Established internal and/or external audits include RAM issues	5

Criteria 4 (Training and outreach)

Informal learning opportunities only	0
Basic training embedded in induction/retirement workshops, limited training opportunities	2
RAM workshops offered to staff with RAM responsibilities (focal points)	3
RAM workshops or e-training offered to staff at large	4
RAM mandatory training or e-training for senior managers and other relevant staff (focal points)	5

Criteria 5 (Preservation of physical paper records/archives)

No attention to preservation of physical paper inactive, permanent value records by organizational units/records producers/users	**0**
Most physical paper records kept at organizational units/records producers/users' premises (active and inactive, permanent) at headquarters or in the field	**1**
Irregular transfers of inactive or permanent value paper records to one secure repository	**2**
Headquarters inactive or permanent value paper records transferred to one secure repository	**4**
All inactive or permanent value paper records **regularly** transferred to one secure repository	**5**

Criteria 6 (Preservation of digital records/archives)

No attention to preservation of digital inactive data/records by organizational units/records producers/users	**0**
Most digital records maintained/kept by organizational units/records producers/users on their own IT devices (active and inactive, permanent), at headquarters or in the field	**1**
Inactive or permanent value digital records irregularly transferred to one secure digital repository	**3**
Headquarters inactive or permanent value digital records transferred to one secure digital repository	**4**
All inactive or permanent value digital records transferred to one secure digital repository	**5**

Annex VIII

JIU online survey on records and archives management practices

In March-April 2013, the Joint Inspection Unit conducted a 38-question survey on the records and archives management practices of 161 selected organizational units within the organizations and entities covered in this report.

In order to provide a diversified picture of practices at Headquarters and in the field, the recipients were selected as follows: Headquarters: the Executive Office of the Executive Head; the department/division related to administrative services/support; one or two substantive departments/divisions specific to the organization or entity's primary mandate; where applicable, 50 per cent of the regional offices and 10 per cent of the country offices; for the United Nations Secretariat, 25 per cent of the United Nations peacekeeping operations and of the special and personal representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General.

JIU collected 58 replies, although some were incomplete, representing a participation rate of 35.1 per cent, which was considered illustrative enough to be reflected in the narrative of this report. It is assumed that only the most acquainted persons with RAM processes and functions felt sufficiently confident to answers the JIU questions. This is a potential bias that may have affected results as collected and may mean that the actual practices followed indicate an even more difficult situation than the one highlighted in this survey.

Participation in the JIU survey on RAM practices

Locations	*Recipients*	*Respondents*	*Participation (percentage)*
Headquarters	48	14 complete surveys	29.1
Field*	113	25 complete surveys	22.1
Total	161	39 complete surveys	24.2
Total	161	58 (includes incomplete surveys)	35.1

* *Includes regional and country/mission level.*

The answers to the survey confirmed the issues highlighted by the relevant officials during interviews and by the written responses provided to the JIU questionnaire.

The survey also included open questions which collected comments and suggestions from the respondents who showed an interest in contributing to this review. They emphasized a number of difficulties, such as the lack of specialized expertise, the limited training offered and available and the loose adherence to policy principles (transfer, destruction, etc.). The biggest concern expressed was about electronic record-keeping in terms of long-term preservation, digitalization programmes and e-mail management, among other things.

Annex IX

Overview of actions to be taken by participating organizations on JIU recommendations

		Intended impact	CEB	United Nations, its funds and programmes														Specialized agencies and IAEA													
				United Nations*	UNCTAD	UNDP	UNEP	UNFPA	UN-Habitat	UNHCR	UNICEF	UNODC	UNOPS	UNRWA	UN-Women	WFP	ITC	FAO	IAEA	ICAO	ILO	IMO	ITU	UNAIDS	UNESCO	UNIDO	UNWTO	UPU	WHO	WIPO	WMO
Report	For action		☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	For information		☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
Recommendation 1		d	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E														
Recommendation 2		d	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E														
Recommendation 3		d	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E														
Recommendation 4		e	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E														
Recommendation 5		g	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E														
Recommendation 6		e	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L														

Legend: **L:** Recommendation for decision by legislative organ **E:** Recommendation for action by the executive head

■ : Recommendation does not require action by this organization Intended impact: **a:** enhanced accountability **b:** dissemination of best practices **c:** enhanced coordination and cooperation **d:** enhanced controls and compliance **e:** enhanced effectiveness **f:** significant financial savings; **g:** enhanced efficiency **o:** other

* Covers all entities listed in ST/SGB/2002/11 other than UNCTAD, UNODC, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, and UNRWA.